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## SECURED CENTRALIZED PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

## CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

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This application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/690,066, filed October 16, 2000, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Applications Serial Nos. 60/160,491, filed October 20, 1999 and entitled "SECURE AND RECOVERABLE DATABASE FOR ON-LINE POSTAGE SYSTEM"; 60/160,503, filed October 20, 1999 and entitled "CRYPTOGRAPHIC MODULE ARCHITECTURE"; 60/160,112, filed October 18, 1999 and entitled "INTERNET POSTAL METERING SYSTEM"; 60/160,563, filed October 20, 1999 and entitled "SERVER ARCHITECTURE FOR ON-LINE POSTAGE SYSTEM"; 60/160,041, filed October 18, 1999 and entitled "CRYPTOGRAPHIC MODULE SECURITY APPROACH"; 60/193,057, filed March 29, 2000 and entitled "CUSTOMER GATEWAY DESIGN"; 60/193,055, filed March 29, 2000 and entitled "BROWSER-BASED IBI"; and 60/193,056, filed March 29, 2000 and entitled "MULTI-USER PSD DESIGN" the entire contents of which are hereby expressly incorporated by reference.

## FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention relates to secure printing of value-bearing items (VBI) preferably, postage. More specifically, the invention relates to a cryptographic module for secure printing of VBIs.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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A significant percentage of the United States Postal Service (USPS) revenue is from metered postage. Metered postage is generated by utilizing postage meters that print a special mark, also known as postal indicia, on mail pieces. Generally, printing postage and any VBI can be carried out by using mechanical meters or computer-based systems.

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1 With respect to computer-based postage processing systems,  
the USPS under the Information-Based Indicia Program (IBIP) has  
published specifications for IBIP postage meters that identify  
5 a special purpose hardware device, known as a Postal Security  
Device (PSD) that is generally located at a user's site. The  
PSD, in conjunction with the user's personal computer and  
printer, functions as the IBIP postage meter. The USPS has  
published a number of documents describing the PSD  
10 specifications, the indicia specifications and other related and  
relevant information. There are also security standards for  
printing other types of VBI, such as coupons, tickets, gift  
certificates, currency, voucher and the like.

15 A significant drawback of existing hardware-based systems  
is that a new PSD must be locally provided to each new user,  
which involves significant cost. Furthermore, if the additional  
PSD breaks down, service calls must be made to the user location.  
In light of the drawbacks in hardware-based postage metering  
systems, a software-based system has been developed that does not  
20 require specialized hardware for each user. The software-based  
system meets the IBIP specifications for a PSD, using a  
centralized server-based implementation of PSDs utilizing one or  
more cryptographic modules. The system also includes a database  
for all users' information. The software-based system, however,  
25 has brought about new challenges.

The software-based system should be able to handle secure  
communications between users and the database. In a hardware-  
based system, security is generally handled by the local hardware  
piece, that is unique to each user and includes an encryption  
30 processor that encrypts that user's information and  
communications. However, as mentioned above, this hardware-based  
system has significant disadvantages.

Therefore, there is a need for a new method and apparatus  
for implementation of VBI secure printing and a secure IBIP  
35 postage meter over a WAN that does not require the special

1 purpose hardware device at the user site. Furthermore, there is  
a need for a secure system and database that are capable of  
preventing unauthorized access and tampering.

5 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, an  
on-line VBI printing system that includes one or more  
cryptographic modules and a central database has been designed.  
10 The cryptographic modules serve the function of the PSDs and are  
capable of implementing the USPS Information Based Indicia  
Program Postal Security Device Performance Criteria and the  
cryptographic security requirements specified by Federal  
Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-1, Security  
15 Requirements for Cryptographic Modules, and other required  
standards. The modules encipher the information stored in the  
central database for all of the on-line VBI system customers and  
are capable of preventing access to the database by unauthorized  
users. Also, a secure communication network is in operation to  
20 prevent unauthorized access to the users' data stored in the  
centralized database. Additionally, the cryptographic module is  
capable of preventing unauthorized and undetected modification,  
including the unauthorized modification, substitution, insertion,  
and deletion of VBI related data and cryptographically critical  
25 security parameters.

Each module prevents the unauthorized disclosure of the non-  
public contents of the VBI data, such as a postage meter,  
including plaintext cryptographic keys and other critical  
security parameters. The module also ensures the proper  
30 operation of cryptographic security and VBI related meter  
functions. The module detects errors in the operation of  
security mechanisms and prevents the compromise of meter data and  
critical cryptographic security parameters as a result of those  
errors.

1 In one aspect the present invention is a method for secure  
printing of value-bearing items over a computer network  
comprising the step of; storing information about users in a  
5 database remote from the user terminals; securing the information  
about the users in the database by a plurality of cryptographic  
devices remote from the user terminals and coupled to the  
computer network; securing data stored in the database by the  
plurality of cryptographic devices, wherein each of the plurality  
10 of cryptographic devices includes a subsystem for authenticating  
one or more of the plurality of users; storing a plurality of  
security device transaction data stored in the database wherein,  
each transaction data is related to a user; ensuring authenticity  
and authority of each of the plurality of users; and loading a  
15 security device transaction data related to a user into one of  
the plurality of cryptographic devices when the user requests to  
operate on a value bearing item.

It is to be understood that the present invention is useful  
for printing not only postage, but any VBIs, such as coupons,  
20 tickets, gift certificates, currency, voucher and the like.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objects, advantages and features of this invention will  
become more apparent from a consideration of the following  
25 detailed description and the drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is an exemplary block diagram for the client/server  
architecture of one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an exemplary block diagram of a remote user  
computer connected to a server via Internet according to one  
30 embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is an exemplary block diagram of a cryptographic  
device according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is an exemplary block diagram of servers, databases,  
and services according to one embodiment of the present  
35 invention;

1           FIG. 5 is an exemplary block diagram of a client software,  
a cryptographic module, and a typical transaction between them  
during an operational state according to one embodiment of the  
5   present invention;

FIG. 6 is an exemplary state transition diagram for a  
cryptographic device according to one embodiment of the present  
invention;

10          FIG. 7 is an exemplary diagram of audit chaining according  
to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 8 is an exemplary diagram of multiple user PSD  
according to one embodiment of the present invention.;

15          FIG. 9 is an exemplary diagram of multiple users using a  
gateway server according to one embodiment of the present  
invention; and

FIG. 10 is an exemplary diagram of a browser-based design  
with or without a UI according to one embodiment of the present  
invention.

## 20   DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In one aspect, the system and method of the present  
invention prevent unauthorized electronic access to a database  
subsystem and secure customers' related data, among others. One  
level of security is achieved by protecting the database  
subsystem by a postal server subsystem. The postal server  
25   subsystem controls preferably, all communications with the  
database subsystem by executing an authentication algorithm to  
prevent unauthorized access. Another level of security is  
achieved by encrypting preferably, all communications between the  
30   client system and the postal server subsystem. The encryption-  
decryption function is employed using commonly known algorithms,  
such as, Rivest, Shamir and Adleman ("RSA") public key  
encryption, DES, Triple-DES, Pseudo-random number generation, and  
the like algorithms. Additionally, DSA signature, and SHA-1

1 hashing algorithms may be used to digitally sign a postage indicium.

5 Another measure of security is the interaction between a cryptographic module and the database subsystem whenever a PSD transaction (security device transaction) is initiated. The cryptographic module and the database subsystem cross-verify the last PSD transaction (security device transaction) before proceeding with the next PSD transaction. If the last transaction record in the cryptographic module and the database subsystem do not match, then the on-line postage system shuts down until the situation can be investigated. This verification process protects against attempts of unauthorized individuals to replace the database subsystem. The registers in the cryptographic modules are cryptographically protected to achieve another level of security.

15 An exemplary on-line postage system is described in U.S. patent Application No. 09/163,993 filed September 15, 1998, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein. The on-line postage system includes an authentication protocol that operates in conjunction with the USPS requirements. The system utilizes on-line postage system software comprising user code that resides on a client system and controller code that resides on a server system. The on-line postage system allows a user to print a postal indicium at home, at the office, or any other desired place in a secure, convenient, inexpensive and fraud-free manner. The system comprises a user system electronically connected to a server system, which in turn is connected to a USPS system.

25 Each of the cryptographic modules may be available for use by any user. When a user requests a PSD service, one of the available modules is loaded with data belonging to the user's account and the transaction is performed. When a module is loaded with a user's data, that module becomes the user's PSD. The database record containing each user's PSD data is referred

1 to as the "PSD package" (security device transaction data).  
After each PSD transaction is completed, the user's PSD package  
is updated and returned to a database external to the module.  
5 The database becomes an extension of the module's memory and  
stores not only the items specified by the IBIP for storage  
inside the PSD, but also the user's personal cryptographic keys  
and other security relevant data items (SRDI) and status  
information needed for continuous operation. Movement of this  
10 sensitive data between the modules and the database is secured  
to ensure that PSD packages could not be compromised.

In one embodiment, the server system is remotely located in  
a separate location from the client system. All communications  
between the client and the server are preferably accomplished via  
the Internet. FIG. 1 illustrates a remote client system 220a  
15 connected to a server system 102 via the Internet 221. The  
client system includes a processor unit 223, a monitor 230,  
printer port 106, a mouse 225, a printer 235, and a keyboard 224.  
Server system 102 includes Postage servers 109, Database 130, and  
cryptographic modules 110.  
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An increase in the number of servers within the server  
system 102 will not negatively impact the performance of the  
system, since the system design allows for scalability. The  
Server system 102 is designed in such a way that all of the  
25 business transactions are processed in the servers and not in the  
database. By locating the transaction processing in the servers,  
increases in the number of transactions can be easily handled by  
adding additional servers. Also, each transaction processed in  
the servers is stateless, meaning the application does not  
30 remember the specific hardware device the last transaction  
utilized. Because of this stateless transaction design, multiple  
servers can be added to each appropriate subsystem in order to  
handle increased loads.

Furthermore, each cryptographic module is a stateless  
35 device, meaning that a PSD package can be passed to any device

1 because the application does not rely upon any information about  
what occurred with the previous PSD package. Therefore, multiple  
cryptographic modules can also be added to each appropriate  
5 subsystem in order to handle increased loads. A PSD package for  
each cryptographic module is a database record, stored in the  
server database, that includes information pertaining to one  
customer's service that would normally be protected inside a  
cryptographic module. The PSD package includes all data needed  
10 to restore the PSD to its last known state when it is next loaded  
into a cryptographic module. This includes the items that the  
IBIP specifications require to be stored inside the PSD,  
information required to return the PSD to a valid state when the  
record is reloaded from the database, and data needed for record  
15 security and administrative purposes.

In one embodiment, the items included in a PSD package  
include ascending and descending registers (the ascending  
register "AR" records the amount of postage that is dispensed or  
printed on each transaction and the descending register "DR"  
20 records the value or amount of postage that may be dispensed and  
decreases from an original or charged amount as postage is  
printed.), device ID, indicia key certificate serial number,  
licensing ZIP code, key token for the indicia signing key, the  
user secrets, key for encrypting user secrets, data and time of  
25 last transaction, the last challenge received from the client,  
the operational state of the PSD, expiration dates for keys, the  
passphrase repetition list and the like.

As a result, the need for specific PSDs being attached to  
specific cryptographic modules is eliminated. A Postal Server  
30 subsystem provides cryptographic module management services that  
allow multiple cryptographic modules to exist and function on one  
server, so additional cryptographic modules can easily be  
installed on a server. The Postal Sever subsystem is easy to  
scale by adding more cryptographic modules and using commonly  
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1 known Internet load-balancing techniques to route inbound requests to the new cryptographic modules.

5 Referring back to FIG. 1, Postage servers 109 includes one or more Postal servers and provide indicia creation, account maintenance, and revenue protection functionality for the on-line postage system. The Postage servers 109 include several physical servers in several distinct logical groupings, or services as described below. The individual servers could be located within 10 one facility, or in several facilities, physically separated by great distance but connected by secure communication links.

15 Cryptographic modules 110 are responsible for creating PSDs and manipulating PSD data to protect sensitive information from disclosure, generating the cryptographic components of the digital indicia, and securely adjusting the user registration. When a user wishes to print VBI , for example, postage or purchase additional VBI or postage value, a user state is instantiated in the PSD implemented within one of the 20 cryptographic modules 110. Database 111 includes all the data accessible on-line for indicia creation, account maintenance, and revenue protection processes. Postage servers 109, Database 130, and cryptographic modules 110 are maintained in a physically secured environment, such as a vault.

25 FIG. 2 shows a simplified system block diagram of a typical Internet client/server environment used by an on-line postage system in one embodiment of the present invention. PCs 220a-220n used by the postage purchasers are connected to the Internet 221 through the communication links 233a-233n. Each PC has access to one or more printers 235. Optionally, as is well understood 30 in the art, a local network 234 may serve as the connection between some of the PCs, such as the PC 220a and the Internet 221 or other connections. Servers 222a-222m are also connected to the Internet 221 through respective communication links. Servers 222a-222m include information and databases accessible by PCs

1 220a-220n. The on-line VBI system of the present invention resides on one or more of Servers 222a-222m.

5 In this embodiment, each client system 220a-220m includes a CPU 223, a keyboard 224, a mouse 225, a mass storage device 231, main computer memory 227, video memory 228, a communication interface 232a, and an input/output device 226 coupled and interacting via a communication bus. The data and images to be displayed on the monitor 230 are transferred first from the video  
10 memory 228 to the video amplifier 229 and then to the monitor 230. The communication interface 232a communicates with the servers 222a-222m via a network link 233a. The network link connects the client system to a local network 234. The local network 234 communicates with the Internet 221.

15 In one embodiment, a customer, preferably licensed by the USPS and registered with an IBIP vendor (such as Stamps.com), sends a request for authorization to print a desired amount of VBI, such as postage. The server system verifies that the user's account holds sufficient funds to cover the requested amount of postage, and if so, grants the request. The server then sends  
20 a cryptographically authenticated response specifying the VBI to the client system. The client system then sends image information for printing of a postal indicium for the granted amount to a printer so that the postal indicium is printed on an envelope or label.

25 In one embodiment, when a client system sends a VBI print request to the server system, the request needs to be authenticated before the client system is allowed to print the VBI, and while the VBI is being printed. The request is  
30 cryptographically authenticated using an authentication code. The client system sends a password (or passphrase) entered by a user to the server for verification. If the password fails, a preferably asynchronous dynamic password verification method terminates the session and printing of the VBI is aborted. Also,  
35 the server system communicates with a system located at a

1 certification authority for verification and authentication purposes.

5 In one embodiment, the information processing components of the on-line postage system include a client system, a postage server system located in a highly secure facility, a USPS system and the Internet as the communication medium among those systems. The information processing equipment communicates over a secured communication line.

10 Preferably, the security and authenticity of the information communicated among the systems are accomplished on a software level through the built-in features of a Secured Socket Layer (SSL) Internet communication protocol. An encryption hardware module embedded in the server system is also used to secure information as it is processed by the secure system and to ensure authenticity and legitimacy of requests made and granted.

15 The on-line VBI system does not require any special purpose hardware for the client system. The client system is implemented in the form of software that can be executed on a user computer (client system) allowing the user computer to function as a virtual VBI meter. The software can only be executed for the purpose of printing the VBI indicia when the user computer is in communication with a server computer located, for example, at a VBI meter vendor's facility (server system). The server system is capable of communicating with one or more client systems simultaneously.

20 In one embodiment of the present invention, the cryptographic modules 110 are FIPS 140-1 certified hardware cards that include firmware to implement PSD functionality in a cryptographically secure way. The cryptographic modules are inserted into any of the servers in the Postal Server Infrastructure. The cryptographic modules are responsible for creating PSDs and manipulating PSD data to generate and verify digitally signed indicia. Since the PSD data is created and signed by a private key known only to the module, the PSD data

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1 may be stored externally to the cryptographic modules without compromising security.

5 FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary cryptographic module. Processor 302 is electrically coupled to the RAM 303, NVM 304, ROM 305. I/O interface 307, Random Number Generator (RNG) 308, Cipher Engine 310, and Clock 309 through the bus 301. NVM 304 and ROM 305 are protected from unauthorized access by the Hardware Locks control 306. A Security sensing & Response (SSR) circuit 311 detects any attempts to tamper with the module and acts accordingly. The SSR circuit includes sensors to protect against attacks involving probe penetration, power sequencing, radiation, temperature manipulation, and the like, consistent with some security standards, such as FIPS 140-1 Level 3 and 4 requirements. If the tamper sensors are triggered, the cipher Engine 310 resets its critical keys, destroys its certification, and is rendered inoperable.

15 Initially, the module generates a unique key pair, which is stored in the secured NVM. The tamper detection circuitry is activated at this time and remains active throughout the useful life of the module, protecting this private key, as well as all other keys and sensitive data. The module's private key is certified by a private key and the certificate is retained in the module. Subsequently, the module's private key is used to sign module status responses which, in conjunction with a series of public key certificates, demonstrates that the module remains intact and is genuine. As a result, only the software that has been signed by an entity trusted by the module (via the embedded public key) will be loaded.

25 Cipher Engine 310 supports multiple custom cryptographic engines and other accelerated state machines to provide complex and numerically intensive operations required for encryption/decryption, authentication, and key management. RNG 308 generates the required data for the Cipher Engine. Clock & Calender circuit 309 generates real-time clock and calender for

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1 the Cipher Engine and the I/O interface 307 provides interface  
to other devices on a computer network.

5 In one embodiment, Cipher Engine 310 includes the following  
logical elements:

- A DES Engine including the following features:
  - DES, Triple DES, MAC and Triple-DES MAC functions
  - Electronic codebook (ECB) support and cipher block chain (CBC) modes of operation
  - 10 • 3 internal 64-bit key registers loaded from a ISA port
  - 64-bit initial vector register loadable from a ISA port
  - 64-bit input & output registers readable from both a 16-bit ISA port or a 32-bit PCI add-on port via the output FIFO
  - 15 • Optional DES assist for data padding of data blocks which are not multiples of 64-bytes

A SHA Engine including the following features:

- SHA-1 secure hash algorithm
- 20 • Four 32-bit K registers with fast initialization to FIPS-180 Constants via an ISA port accessible control register
- Five 32-bit H registers with fast initialization to FIPS-180 initial values by an ISA port accessible control register. Hashing data loadable into H registers via the 16-bit ISA port or the 32-bit PCI add-on port and input FIFO. Hash results readable from five 32-bit H registers via ISA port.
- 25 • Five internal registers for SHA-1 hash results creation
- 30 • SHA engine exercises FIPS 180-1 algorithm. Digital Signature Standard FIPS PUB-186 pseudo random number creation possible by programming K constants and H initialization vector registers via the ISA bus input.

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A RSA Engine capable of performing the following modular arithmetic and exponentiation functions for high speed RSA encryption:

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Modular Exponentiation With CRT (chinese remainder theorem)	$R = A^{(B_p, B_q)} \bmod (N_p, N_q)$
Modular exponentiation	$R = A^B \bmod N$
Modular multiplication	$R = (A * B) \bmod N$
Modular addition	$R = (A + B) \bmod N$
Addition	$R = (A + B)$
Subtraction	$R = (A - B)$
2's complement	$R = \sim A + 1$
Signature	$R = A^B \bmod N; \text{if } (2R \geq N) R = N - R$
Verify	$R = A^B \bmod N; \text{if } (R \bmod 16 \neq 6) R = N - R$

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The RSA engine is a 2048-bit engine with the following registers:

Operand Register	Length (bits)	Contents
A	2048	Data
B	2048	Exponent
$B_p$	1088	CRT Mod Expo. only
$B_q$	1024	CRT Mod Expo. only
N	2048	Module
$N_q$	1088	CRT Mod Expo. only
$N_p$	1024	CRT Mod Expo. only
U	1088 (CRT only)	Multiplicative inverse for CRT
R	2048	Results

Registers  $B_1$   $B_{p1}$   $B_{q1}$   $N_1$   $N_{p1}$   $N_q$  and U are write only from the ISA port of the UltraCypher module.

Register R (results) is read only from the ISA port of the UltraCypher module  
Chinese Remainder (CRT) Operands

A = data

$B_p$  = the largest of two odd primes so  $N = N_p * N_q$

$B_q$  = the smallest of two odd primes so  $N = N_p * N_q$

$N_p = B \bmod (N_p - 1)$

$N_q = B \bmod (N_q - 1)$

U = Multiplicative inverse:  $N_q^{-1} \bmod N_p$

Exponentiation performance can be enhanced by enabling the built-in Chinese Remainder Theorem (CRT) algorithm.

In this embodiment, there are ten 16-bit Control, Setup, and Status registers which are written and read via the ISA bus. Some are read only and some are write only from outside of the module. These registers control the data paths and various engines inside of the module and provide information as to the status of the engines and FIFO's.

1 A 64-bit shift register is provided for the collecting of  
Random data bits generated from outside the module. The external  
1-bit input (usually a random noise source) is sampled and loaded  
5 into bit-0 of the shift register. The sampling rate is  
controlled from control register bits which are loaded via the  
ISA bus. The collected data bits are shifted after each new  
sampling of data. When the shift register is full of new data  
an interrupt is generated and the shift register contents may be  
10 read from the ISA data port.

A 128x32-bit Input FIFO and a similar Output FIFO is  
provided in the module to buffer a PCI Add-on bus.

INPUT FIFO Inputs	INPUT FIFO Outputs	OUTPUT FIFO Inputs	OUTPUT FIFO Outputs
PCI add-on bus	DES engine	DES engine	PCI add-on bus
ISA bus	SHA-1 engine	ISA bus	ISA bus
	OUTPUT FIFO	INPUT FIFO	
	ISA bus		

A multipurpose 16-bit data interface supports an ISA 16-bit  
cycles. Addressing of the module's internal registers is via the  
ISA address bus. The PCI Add-on bus is capable of supporting PCI  
bus master. There are also 8 IRQ interrupt outputs, reset, other  
25 control lines, clock I/O.

The cryptographic module of the present invention may be  
embodied in a single-chip module, a multi-chip embedded module,  
a multi-chip standalone module, embedded in software running on  
a computer such as a personal computer, or the like.

30 The on-line VBI system is based on a client/server  
architecture. Generally, in a system based on client/server  
architecture the server system delivers information to the client  
system. That is, the client system requests the services of a  
generally larger computer. In one embodiment, the client is a  
35 local personal computer and the server is a more powerful group



1 of computers that house the information. The connection from the  
client to the server is made via a Local Area Network, a phone  
line or a TCP/IP based WAN on the Internet. A primary reason to  
5 set up a client/server network is to allow many clients access  
to the same applications and files stored on the server system.

In one embodiment, Postage servers 109 include a string of  
servers connected to the Internet, for example, through a T1  
line, protected by a firewall. The firewall permits a client to  
10 communicate with a server system, only if the information packet  
transmitted by the client system complies with a security policy  
set by the server system. The firewall not only protects the  
system from unauthorized users on the Internet, it also separates  
the Public Network (PUBNET) from the Private Network (PRVNET).  
15 This ensures that packets from the Internet will not go to any  
location but the PUBNET. The string of servers form the  
different subsystems of the on-line postal system. The services  
provided by the different subsystems of the on-line postage  
system are designed to allow flexibility and expansion and reduce  
20 specific hardware dependancy.

The Database subsystem is comprised of multiple databases.  
FIG. 4 illustrates an overview of the on-line VBI system which  
includes the database subsystems. Database 411 includes the  
Affiliate DBMS and the Source IDs DBMS. The Affiliate DBMS  
25 manages affiliate information (e.g., affiliate's name, phone  
number, and affiliate's Website information) that is stored on  
the Affiliate Database. Using the data from this database,  
marketing and business reports are generated. The Source IDs  
Database contains information about the incoming links to the  
30 vendor's Website (e.g., partners' information, what services the  
vendor offers, what marketing program is associated with the  
incoming links, and co-branding information). Using the data  
from this database, marketing and business reports are generated.

The Online Store Database 412 contains commerce product  
35 information, working orders, billing information, password reset

1 table, and other marketing related information. Website database  
410 keeps track of user accesses to the vendor website. This  
database keeps track of user who access the vendor website, users  
5 who are downloading information and programs, and the links from  
which users access the vendor website. After storing these data  
on the Website Database 410, software tools are used to generate  
the following information:

- Web Site Status
- 10 • Web Site Reports
- Form Results
- Download Successes
- Signup, Downloads, and Demographic Graphs
- Web Server Statistics (Analog)
- 15 • Web Server Statistics (Web Analyzer)

Offline database 409 manages the VBI (e.g., postal) data  
except meter information, postal transactions data, financial  
transactions data (e.g., credit card purchases, free postage  
issued, bill credits, and bill debits), customer marketing  
20 information, commerce product information, meter license  
information, meter resets, meter history, and meter movement  
information. Consolidation Server 413 acts as a repository for  
data, centralizing data for easy transportation outside the vault  
400. The Consolidation Server hosts both file and database  
25 services, allowing both dumps of activity logs and reports as  
well as a consolidation point for all database data.

The Offline Reporting Engine MineShare Server 415 performs  
extraction transformation from the holding database that received  
transaction data from the Consolidated Database (Commerce  
30 database 406, Membership database 408, and Postal Database 407).  
Also, the Offline Reporting Engine MineShare Server handles some  
administrative tasks. Transaction data in the holding database  
contains the transaction information about meter licensing  
information, meter reset information, postage purchase  
35 transactions, and credit card transactions. After performing

1 extraction transformation, business logic data are stored on  
Offline Database 409. Transaction reports are generated using  
the data on the Offline Database. Transaction reports contain  
5 marketing and business information.

The Data Warehouse database 414 includes all customer  
information, financial transactions, and aggregated information  
for marketing queries (e.g., how many customers have purchased  
postage). In one embodiment, commerce Database 406 includes a  
10 Payment Database, an E-mail Database, and a Stamp Mart Database.  
The E-mail DBMS manages access to the contents of e-mail that  
were sent out to everyone by vendor servers. The Stamp Mart  
database handles order form processing. The E-commerce Server  
404 provides e-commerce related services on a user/group  
15 permission basis. It provides commerce-related services such as  
payment processing, pricing plan support and billing as well as  
customer care functionality and LDAP membership personalization  
services.

A Credit Card Service is invoked by the E-commerce Server  
404 to authorize and capture funds from the customer's credit  
card account and to transfer them to the vendor's merchant bank.  
A Billing Service is used to provide bills through e-mail to  
customers based on selected billing plans. An ACH service runs  
20 automatically at a configurable time. It retrieves all pending  
ACH requests and batches them to be sent to bank for postage  
purchases (i.e. money destined for the USPS), or Chase for fee  
payments which is destined for the vendor account.

The E-commerce DBMS 406 manages access to the vendor  
specific Payment, Credit Card, and Email Databases. A Membership  
DBMS manages access to the LDAP membership directory database 408  
30 that hosts specific customer information and customer membership  
data. A Postal DBMS manages access to the Postal Database 407  
where USPS specific data such as meter and licensing information  
are stored. A Postal Server 401 provides secure services to the  
Client, including client authentication, postage purchase, and  
35

1 indicia generation. The Postal Server requires cryptographic modules to perform all functions that involve client authentication, postage purchase, and indicia generation.

5 Postal Transaction Server 403 provides business logic for postal functions such as device authorization and postage purchase/register manipulation. The Postal Transaction Server requires the cryptographic modules to perform all functions. There are four Client Support Servers. Address Matching Server  
10 (AMS) 417 verifies the correct address specified by a user. When the user enters a delivery address or a return address using the Client Software, the user does not need the address matching database on the user's local machine to verify the accuracy of the address. The Client software connects to the vendor's server and uses the central address database obtained from the USPS to  
15 verify the accuracy of the address. If the address is incorrect, the client software provides the user with a prioritized list of addresses to match the correct address. These choices are ranked in a user definable order. This information is represented using a plain text format.

20 The Client Support Servers 417 provides the following services: a Pricing Plan service, an Auto Update service, and a Printer Config service. The Pricing Plan Service provides information on pricing plans and payment methods available to the user. It also provides what credit cards are supported and whether ACH is supported. This information is represented preferably using a plain text format. The Auto Update Service  
25 verifies whether the user is running the latest Client Software. If there is newer Client Software, the Auto Update Server downloads the new patches to the user computer. The Client Support Database has tables for the client software update information. This information is represented using a plain text  
30 format.

35 Before the user tries to print postage, the user sends his or her printer driver information over the Internet in plain

1 text. The Printer Config Service looks up the printer driver  
information in the Printer Driver Database to determine whether  
the printer driver is supported or not. When the user tries to  
5 configure the printer, the user prints a test envelope to test  
whether the postage printing is working properly or not. This  
testing envelope information is sent over the Internet in plain  
text and is stored in the Client Support Database.

MeterGen server 422 makes calls into the cryptographic  
10 module to create sufficient meters to ensure that the vendor can  
meet customer acquisition demands. SMTP Server 418 communicates  
with other SMTP servers, and it is used to forward e-mail to  
users. Gatekeeper Server works as a proxy server by handling the  
security and authentication validation for the smart card users  
15 to access customer and administration information that reside in  
the vault.

The Proxy Server 423 uses the Netscape™ Enterprise SSL  
library to provide a secure connection to the vault 400. Audit  
File Server 419 acts as a repository for module transaction logs.  
20 The Audit logs are cryptographically protected. The Audit File  
Server verifies the audit logs that are digitally signed. The  
audit logs are verified in real time as they are being created.  
Postal Server writes audit logs to a shared hard drive on the  
Audit File Server. After these logs are verified, the Audit File  
25 Server preferably moves them from the shared hard drive to a  
storage device that is not shared by any of the vendor servers.

Provider Server provides reporting and external  
communication functionality including the following services.  
CMLS Service forwards license applications and it processes  
30 responses from CMLS. The CMLS Service uses cryptographic  
functions provided by the Stamps.com Crypt library to decrypt the  
user's SSN/Tax ID/Employee ID. CMRS Service reports meter  
movement and resetting to the USPS Computerized Meter Resetting  
infrastructure. ACH Service is responsible for submitting ACH  
35 postage purchase requests to the USPS lockbox account at the

1 bank. The CMLS Service uses cryptographic functions to decrypt the user's ACH account number.

5 After decrypting ACH account information, the ACH is encrypted using the vendor's script library. Then, the encrypted ACH file is e-mailed to the Commerce Group by the SMTP server. When the Commerce Group receives this encrypted e-mail, the vendor's Decrypt utility application is used to decrypt the ACH e-mail. After verifying the ACH information, the Commerce Group  
10 sends the ACH information through an encrypted device first and then uses a modem to upload the ACH information to a proper bank. The Certificate Authority issues certificates for all IBIP meters. The certificates are basically used to provide authentication for indicia produced by their respective meters.

15 The following are exemplary steps describing the certificate authorization process:

- MeterGen asks the module to create a meter package,
- The module returns a package and the meter's public key,
- MeterGen creates a certificate request with the public key, signs the request with a USPS-issued smartcard, and submits the request to the USPS Certificate Authority,
- The Certificate Authority verifies the request came from the vendor then, it creates a new certificate and returns it to MeterGen,
- MeterGen verifies the certificate using the USPS Certificate Authority's certificate (e.g., to ensure it wasn't forged) and stores the certificate information in the package. The package is now ready to be associated with a customer.

25  
30 The Postal Server subsystem 401 controls client and remote administration access to server functionality, authenticates clients and allows clients to establish a secure connection to the on-line postage system. The Postal Server subsystem also manages access to USPS specific data such as PSD information and  
35 a user's license information. The Postal Server subsystem

1 queries the Postal portion of the Database subsystem for the  
necessary information to complete the task. The query travels  
through the firewall to the Postal portion of the Database  
5 subsystem. The Postal Server subsystem is the subsystem in the  
Public Network that has access to the Database subsystem.

In one embodiment of the present invention, Postal Server  
401 is a standalone server process that provides secure  
connections to both the clients and the server administration  
10 utilities, providing both client authentication and connection  
management functionality to the system. Postal Server 401 also  
houses postal-specific services that require high levels of  
security, such as purchasing postage or printing indicia. Postal  
Server 401 is comprised of at least one server, and the number  
15 of servers increases when more clients need to be authenticated,  
are purchasing postage or are printing postage indicia.

The growth in the number of servers of the Postal Server  
will not impact the performance of the system since the system  
design allows for scalability. The Postal Server is designed in  
20 such a way that all of the business logic is processed in the  
servers and not in the database. By locating the transaction  
processing in the servers, increases in the number of  
transactions can be easily handled by adding additional servers.  
Also, since each transaction is stateless (the application does  
25 not remember the specific hardware device the last transaction  
utilized), multiple machines can be added to each subsystem in  
order to handle increased loads. In one embodiment, load  
balancing hardware and software techniques are used to distribute  
traffic among the multiple servers.

30 Typically, the security requirements of an online VBI system  
entail protections of two basic types: Logical and Physical, or  
both. Logical protections employ cryptographic techniques  
involving encryption algorithms and authentication processes.  
Physical security measures are required to prevent undetected  
35 tamper and to protect stored critical data from unauthorized

1 access, modification or destruction. The PSD functionality and data are to be protected by the cryptographic modules.

5 For the embodiment that includes printing postage, system functional requirements are based on the IBIP specifications. The PSD is preferably located at a central location (for example, the Internet server) and may service multiple clients. The PSD's functions include client authorization (assignment of a "meter" to a client), postage register arithmetic operations, creation and printing of a valid postage, messages between the provider  
10 infrastructure and PSD, and the like.

The following functional security objectives are achieved by the cryptographic module according to one aspect of the present invention:

- 15 • preventing unauthorized and undetected modification of data, including the unauthorized modification, substitution, insertion, and deletion of postage related data and cryptographically critical security parameters;
- 20 • preventing the unauthorized disclosure of the non-public contents of the postage meter, including plaintext cryptographic keys and other critical security parameters;
- ensuring the proper operation of cryptographic security and postage related meter functions;
- 25 • detecting errors in the operation of security mechanisms and to prevent the compromise of meter data and critical cryptographic security parameters as a result of those errors;
- 30 • providing indications of the operational state of the postage meter; and



- 1
- employing generally accepted security methods for the protection of the meter and cryptographic module, and their contents.

5       The cryptographic module is capable of supporting authorized roles and the corresponding services that can be performed within those roles. Since the module can support multiple concurrent operators, the module internally maintains the separation of the roles and services performed by each operator. Furthermore, a  
10       cryptographic module is used to employ access control mechanisms to authenticate an operator accessing the module (either directly or indirectly via a computer process acting on his or her behalf) and to verify that the operator is authorized to assume the  
15       desired role and to perform the desired services within that role.

      In one embodiment, the roles supported by the module includes the following roles:

- 20       • Security Officer role initiates key management functions, including import, export, activation and de-activation of keys.
- Key Custodian role takes possession of (encrypted) shares of keys during key export and enter them during key import.
- 25       • Administrator role manages the user access control database.
- 30       • Auditor role manages (views, saves, archives, and deletes) audit logs.
- Provider role transmits signed messages to the PSD's for postage refilling and other provider functions.

- 1       •     User role performs the expected IBIP postal meter operations.
- 5       •     Certificate Authority role allows the PSD's public key certificate to be loaded and verified.

Access to the first four of the above listed roles is preferably obtained by logging on from a computer connected to the cryptographic module. Software applications on the computer and in the module first establish a secure communications channel (a session). A session master key is established using a NIST approved protocol, for example, anonymous unauthenticated Diffie-Hellman key exchange. The Diffie-Hellman system parameters,  $p$  and  $q$ , are embedded in the software of the module and the associated computer. Because the Diffie-Hellman protocol is vulnerable to certain attacks, preferably, the computer and the module are isolated from the LAN whenever a secure session is required. The master key is then used to derive transaction keys (for MACing and encrypting) that are changed after each message is transmitted.

Once the secure session with the module is established, the entities logging on can input their names and passphrases to provide identity based authentication for the selected role. During the initializing state of the module, access control data for the entity that will assume the administrator role is entered in a module access control database. This allows the administrator to log on and enter access control data for all other entities who will require access to the module.

The confidentiality requirement in FIPS 140-1 mandates encryption of all sensitive security parameters, including passwords. The cryptographic module of the present invention establishes the session and its security services first, and then transmits the password over the encrypted (and authenticated) channel.

1           The user passphrase as typed on the keyboard is hashed by  
the host machine and the module only has knowledge of the hash  
value. In the remainder of this document, the hashed passphrase  
5 as used to get access to the module is called the password.

          Preferably, there is no operational requirement to have more  
than one user logged on at the same time, or to have users with  
more than one role. This is desirable because of separation of  
duties. In one embodiment, for each action that is requested,  
10 the access control makes it clear which user requested it, and  
what his role(s) is (are). This holds irrespective of whether  
the request is granted or denied. This would be difficult to  
achieve if more than one user is logged on at the same time.

15           Certain roles have disjoint sets of authorized commands.  
For example, an Auditor is not authorized to perform any  
operational or key management related commands. While it is  
possible to check that a user does not possess certain roles as  
well as verifying that he does possess another role (e.g., verify  
20 that the user is *not* an Administrator, and is a Security  
Officer), this would complicate the code and the design. A more  
elegant and foolproof method is to disallow users to hold  
multiple roles. If one physical user ever has to have more than  
one role, an easy solution is to provide multiple accounts for  
25 this user, one account for each role.

          In one embodiment, for each user, the following user profile  
data is maintained inside the module, in permanent storage:

- 30           • Username (User ID, UID)
- User Role (Role ID, RID)
- Password (hashed passphrase)
- 35           • Logon failure count

- 1           •     Logon failure limit
- Logon time-out limit
- 5           •     Account expiration
- Password expiration
- Password period (the period for which password  
10           validity is granted when changing it).

The following functions are provided for access management:

- 15           •     Initialization of the access control database.
- Begin Admin (transition to Administrative state).
- End Admin (transition back to Operational state).
- Creation of an account.
- 20           •     Deletion of an account.
- Modification of an account.
- Viewing the access control database. This command  
25           lists all users and their roles, account expiration,  
              last access, but (of course) not the user passwords.
- Logon.
- Logoff.
- 30           •     Query Current User Role.
- Query Current User ID.
- Change password.
- 35           •     Set the internal module clock.

- Get Status.

The initialization of the access control database creates the minimal set of users required by the module. This set includes one Administrator, one Security Officer and at least two Key Custodians. This command is the first command in Initializing state, as all other commands require one of these users. Creation, deletion and modification of an account and access control database and setting the internal module clock are restricted to users with Administrator role, in Administrative state only. Administrative state is entered by the Start Admin command, issued by a Security Officer in Operational state.

All sensitive Administrative commands are collected in Administrative state and require Administrator user role. This separation of roles ensures dual control. Secondly, the transition to Administrative state will ensure that no operational commands can be issued by the Administrator (separation of duties). Finally, Administrative state can only be reached from Operational state, ensuring that initialization of the module has been completed successfully before any administrative command can be issued. The End Admin command causes the module to transition back to Operational state.

Preferably, the cryptographic module only allows one session to be established at a time. After authenticating to select a role, the entity can then issue any command that is available to that role. Preferably, meter users are authenticated on a command-by-command basis. During the user registration process, a DES MAC key, generated by the client cryptographic software, is transmitted to the module and is stored in the client's PSD package. Each command from a user that requests PSD services is DES MAC'ed with his personal DES MAC key which allows the module to authenticate the user. Many clients can be simultaneously connected to the transaction server and the module(s) will

1 respond to their requests for service as each request is received from a client.

5 The provider is authenticated on a command-by-command basis. Provider messages are signed using DSA. The signature is verified using the public key which is loaded into the module when it is initialized for postal operation. The certificate authority role is authenticated by using the Certificate Authority ("CA") certificate to verify the signature on the PSD's public key certificate. In one embodiment, the module implements identity based authentication for all roles which meets the requirements of FIPS 140-1, level 3, in the area of roles and services.

15 In one embodiment of the present invention, the cryptographic module is implemented within an IBM 4758 cryptographic Coprocessor to securely print VBIs. The IBM 4758 provides a set of cryptographic hardware and software within a protective enclosure that could be customized through additional software development. The IBM 4758 specification is described in "Building a High-Performance, Programmable Secure Coprocessor," S.W. Smith and S. Weingart, IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, February 17, 1998; and "IBM 4758 Cryptographic Coprocessor Specification," available on IBM's website (www.IBM.com), the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

25 The module's software is divided into four separately controlled layers. Software layers zero and one allow the module to initialize itself after power up, run self-tests, and include functions to cryptographically authenticate software loaded into layers two and three. The 4758 module, including the software of layer zero and one, has received a Security Level 4 certificate from NIST. In this embodiment, the present invention

1 is implemented by developing a new and proprietary crypto service and postal application software for installation in layer three.

5 FIPS 140-1 cryptographic security requirements are graded into four levels of increasing security and assurance. At the transaction server, SSL cryptographic functions may be implemented with software at security level 1, or may employ a cryptographic module to achieve a greater level of security. For the cryptographic module of the present invention, security level 10 3 requirements are specified for each of the applicable FIPS 140-1 security areas, except Physical Security, which is specified as level 4. The following are brief descriptions of level 3 and level 4 security principles.

15 Level 3 provides for identity-based authentication, which is stronger than the role-based authentication used in level 2. The module need to authenticate the identity of an operator and verify that the identified operator is authorized to assume a specific role and perform a corresponding set of services.

20 Level 3 also provides stronger requirements for entering and outputting critical security parameters. The data ports used for critical security parameters need to be physically separated or logically distinct from other data ports. Furthermore, the parameters need to either be entered into or output from the 25 module in encrypted form, in which case they may travel through enclosing or intervening systems, or be directly entered into or output from the module (without passing through enclosing or intervening systems) using split knowledge procedures.

30 Level 3 allows software cryptography in multi-user, timeshared systems when a trusted operating system is employed along with a trusted path for the entry and output of critical security parameters. A trusted operating system with a trusted path would have the capability to protect cryptographic software 35 and critical security parameters from other untrusted software

1 that may run on the system. Such a system could prevent  
plaintext from being mixed with ciphertext, and it could prevent  
the unintentional transmission of plaintext keys.

5 Security level 4 provides the highest level of security.  
Level 4 physical security provides an envelope of protection  
around the cryptographic module. Whereas, the tamper detection  
circuits of lower level modules may be bypassed, the intent of  
level 4 protection is to detect a penetration of the device from  
10 any direction. For example, if one attempts to cut through the  
enclosure of the cryptographic module, the attempt is detected  
and all critical security parameters are preferably zeroized.  
Level 4 devices are particularly useful for operation in a  
physically unprotected environment where an intruder could  
15 possibly tamper with the device.

Level 4 also protects a module against a compromise of its  
security due to environmental conditions or fluctuations outside  
of the module's normal operating ranges for voltage and  
temperature. Intentional excursions beyond the normal operating  
20 ranges could be used to thwart a module's defense during an  
attack. A module is required to either include special  
environmental protection features designed to detect fluctuations  
or to undergo rigorous environmental failure testing that  
provides a reasonable assurance that the module will not be  
25 affected by fluctuations outside of the normal operating range  
in a manner that can compromise the security of the module.

The cryptographic modules are capable of being used in a  
multi-node server based environment. When the transaction server  
receives a request that requires module services, it gathers all  
30 data required to perform the service and inputs it to a module  
as part of a module command. Depending on the service requested,  
the module may generate outputs such as a message to the provider  
infrastructure, a message to the client, or an updated PSD  
package to be stored by the database server. The transaction  
35 server acts on these module outputs to continue the transaction



1 sequence by relaying messages to the provider, the client, or the  
database. Although the server directs the system's operation,  
the modules and other cryptographic elements of the system  
5 maintain the integrity of data flowing through the system without  
relying on the server's software.

Each of the cryptographic modules of the present invention  
is capable of performing Key management, whether the module  
implements a secret key (symmetric) algorithm or a public key  
10 (asymmetric) algorithm. Secret keys and private keys are  
protected from unauthorized disclosure, modification or  
substitution. Public keys are protected against unauthorized  
modification or substitution. Detailed key management  
requirements are defined in FIPS 140-1, the contents of which is  
15 incorporated by reference herein. Cryptographic key management  
is typically concerned with the entire life cycle of the  
cryptographic keys employed within a cryptographic-based security  
system, including their generation, distribution, entry, use,  
storage, archiving and destruction.

20 FIPS 140-1 allows key generation for a cryptographic module  
to be done either inside the module or outside the module and  
then loaded into the module. Because the postage server uses  
many identical modules to perform the PSD functions, certain keys  
are generated and distributed to the other identical modules.  
25 All keys are generated using FIPS approved key generation  
algorithms, for example the following FIPS approved Standards,  
the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference  
herein.

FIPS PUB 46-2: Data Encryption Standard (DES)

30 FIPS PUB 46-3: Requirements for 3DES

FIPS PUB 112: Password Usage

FIPS PUB180-1: Secure Hash Standard (SHA-1)

FIPS PUB 186: Digital Signature Standard

35 ANSI X9.52-1998 Triple Data Encryption Algorithm Modes of  
Operation

1           PKCS#1:RSA (1024 bits)

          PKCS#3: Anonymous Diffie-Hellman.

          Each module provides key management support for keys that  
5   are used for user data protection. The module is used for the  
management of a large number of postage meters. Presumably, this  
number may be too large for (permanent) storage inside the  
modules. Therefore, all data pertaining to postage meters is  
10 stored external to the modules. This necessitates security  
mechanisms guarded by the module to maintain authenticity and  
confidentiality of this meter data. In addition, load balancing  
requires the sharing of the load between multiple modules.  
Finally, it is not feasible to predict which module will be  
15 processing a certain meter. This leads to the following  
features:

- Each module supports confidentiality (encryption) and authentication of user data sets when stored outside the module. These keys used for this are called the Master Encryption Key (MEK) and the Master Authentication Key (MAK), respectively.
- Each module supports encryption and authentication of the key token format: DES (sccDES\_Key\_t), DSA (sccDSAKeyToken\_t) and RSA (sccRSAKeyToken\_t), and preferably also generic support for arbitrary-length key data buffers.
- 25 • Each module supports generation of Master Keys (MEK and MAK) using the module's hardware-based RNG. Encryption meets FIPS 46-3 requirements for 3DES.
- Each module provides a backup strategy for Master Keys that maintains security with guaranteed availability under all reasonable circumstances.
- 30 • Each module supports activation and de-activation of Master Keys.
- Each module supports rollover from one Master Key Set (MEK and MAK) to another set. This implies support for two Master Key Sets, an active one, and a dormant one. In

1           addition, each module provides translation of data  
protected under one of these sets to protection under the  
other set.

- 5       • Each module supports deletion of a (dormant) MKS. This is  
required in case of compromise of an MKS.

Decryption of the data set and verification of its  
authenticity by another module different than the one that  
created the encrypted data set is also possible. This implies  
10 the requirement of sharing (cloning) of the decryption and  
authentication keys between modules.

- Export of a Master Key Set (MKS) to another module.  
• Import of an MKS from another module.  
• Export and Import of an MKS is encrypted and authenticated.  
15 • Import and export is under dual control; at least 3 users  
should be involved.  
• The module that exports an MKS determines whether this MKS  
is exportable from the importing module.

A MKS is generated in the master module. The master module  
20 can export an MKS to other modules, in shares, each encrypted  
under the destination module's Transport Public Key. This  
process requires prior export of the Transport Public Key from  
the destination module by a Key Custodian, and provision of that  
key to the master as an input parameter to the Export Share  
25 command. The generation of the Transport Key Pair is done in  
Initializing state; this command transitions to Importing Shares  
state. The export of the Transport Public Key is done in  
Operational or Importing Shares state; the actual import of the  
MKS is preferably done in Importing Shares state.

30       The Transport Private Key is a retained key; it can not be  
exported outside the module it was generated in. This ensures  
that export of an MKS always is destined for one well-determined  
module. Generation of a Transport Key Pair only in Initializing  
state ensures that a module has only one Transport Key Pair in  
35 its lifetime; a Reset is required to return to Initializing

1 state. Moreover, transition from Initializing to Importing  
Shares state upon generation of the Transport Key means that any  
module should have an MKS when in Operational state.

5 A MKS can be exported as an exportable MKS or as a retained  
MKS. This is a property of the exported key itself; the  
destination module respects this distinction. An exportable MKS  
can be exported in the same way as the master exports its  
internally generated key. A retained key cannot be exported  
10 (attempted export of a retained MKS will fail). This  
architecture allows for limitation of the number of modules with  
an exportable MKS. Unless all of these modules have to be reset,  
one can always create additional modules with the same MKS. At  
the same time, there can be fairly tight control over the (few)  
15 modules with an exportable MKS.

In case all exportable copies of an MKS are lost (all  
modules containing an exportable copy are reset or lost) one can  
still continue processing with any modules that are still  
operational. Next, one can create a new MKS (possibly in a new  
master) and export that to all operational modules. These  
20 modules then can roll over to the new key. Subsequently, one can  
add new modules with this new MKS, like before.

Preferably, all operational modules can be brought back to  
operational state with the proper MKS as long as at least one  
exportable copy of this MKS exists. If all exportable copies are  
lost, one could just continue operating with any remaining  
operational copies, generate a new MKS in the master (possibly  
a new module) and roll over to that new MKS in the operational  
modules. Subsequently, one can create new modules with that MKS,  
30 just like before.

This implies that no special backup procedures are required;  
the cloning procedures and the fact that all exportable copies  
of an MKS act as each other's backup copy are sufficient to  
maintain availability under all circumstances that can reasonably  
35 expected to occur.

1 To maximize the probability that at least one exportable  
 copy of the MKS is always available, an additional MKS backup  
 copy can be created by reserving a separate (non-operational)  
 5 module for its storage. To avoid existence of an operational  
 module without attendance, the import of the MKS is preferably  
 only done when the backup copy is needed. Preferably, the export  
 is done in an  $n$ -out-of- $m$ - secret sharing scheme (Shamir).

10 In the descriptions below for losing keys, the backup shares  
 together with the backup module are considered to constitute an  
 exportable MKS. Note that the backup module use requires prior  
 import of  $n$  of the  $m$  shares.

15 If no exportable copies of the MKS are lost, no capabilities  
 are lost, just operational capacity (bandwidth). This allows a  
 quick return to full capacity in case a module is lost (see  
 below), as well as increase of capacity, since the MKS can be  
 exported to a new module.

The recovery procedure is repeated for each of the modules  
 that have lost the MKS.

20 For a new module or if the transport key is also lost:  
 reset (or replace) the operational module and generate a  
 new Transport Key Pair in Initializing state;  
 export the Transport Public Key from the destination  
 module;  
 25 export encrypted shares of the MKS (for this Transport  
 Public Key) from the source module;  
 import the encrypted MKS to the destination module;  
 activate the MKS in the destination module.

30 If some (but not all) exportable copies of the MKS are lost,  
 the remaining copies can still export, therefore, no capabilities  
 are lost. (Some capacity may be lost) This allows a quick  
 return to full capacity by restoring the MKS in all modules that  
 lost it (or in their replacement).

35 If the only remaining exportable MKS is the backup copy,  
 first import  $n$  of the backup shares into the backup module. This

1 module now is a normal module with an exportable MKS, so the  
remainder of the procedure is the same as described above. In  
this case, all operational modules can continue operating with  
5 the current MKS. The only capability lost in this case is export  
of the MKS, and therefore the addition of new modules.

The Recovery procedure is as follow:

Reset (or replace) the master;

Generate a new MKS in Initializing state;

10 For each module that is still operational:

Import this module's Transport Public Key;

Export the new MKS from the new master, encrypted  
under this Transport Public Key. If the destination  
module contains a retained copy of the old MKS, the  
exported MKS should be a retained copy, else it may be  
15 an exportable MKS;

Import the new MKS into the operational module;

Translate the protection of all data from the old MKS to  
the new MKS;

20 Activate the new MKS in each of the operational modules.

This returns the system to a state equivalent to that before  
loss of all exportable copies of the MKS. In particular, new  
capacity can now be added again. However, during this recovery,  
the system has a reduced capacity (only modules that are still  
operational are running).

25 All keys involved in session key management (ephemeral DH  
keys, session master keys and transaction keys) are maintained  
by session management (described below). Local keys are used for  
encryption of sensitive data stored in persistent memory, to  
avoid exposure in case of tampering. One mechanism chosen for  
30 this is the PPD read/write mechanism for the memory (sccSavePPD  
and sccGetPPD) where the encryption keys are stored in NVM (which  
is cleared on tamper). The key management is internal to the  
module.

35

1           Key management services related to cloning and management  
of the MKS include:

- The Key Management Services module interface function
- 5   • Generate MKS
- Generate Transport Public Key (TPK)
- Export Transport Public Key
- Create MKS Shares
- Export MKS Share
- 10   • Leave Exporting Shares state
- Start Importing MKS (transition to Importing Shares  
state)
- Import MKS Share
- Combine MKS Shares
- 15   • Activate MKS (deactivates old MKS, if any, and  
activates a new one)
- Delete the dormant MKS
- Encryption and/or MAC Translation (decrypt and verify  
MAC under old MKS; compute MAC and re-encrypt under  
new MKS)
- 20

Usage of the MKS include:

- Compute MAC and Encrypt
- Decrypt and verify MAC
- Compute MAC
- 25   • Verify MAC

The following two keys are generated by a module when the  
start initialization command is executed. These keys are not  
shared with other modules.

- 30   • ASK, audit signing key. This is a 1024-bit DSA key  
used to sign entries in an audit log.
- Audit Verification Public Key. This key is output  
from the module and will be used to authenticate the  
audit record log.

35   The following two keys are generated by a Master  
cryptographic module when the MKS command is executed.

- 1 • MEK, the master encrypting key. This is a triple-DES key used by the module to encrypt all external key tokens for keys that are generated by the modules.
- 5 • MAK, the master authentication key. This is preferably an 8-byte key used to generate a DES MAC for key tokens encrypted by the MEK.

The following two keys are generated by the modules that are not Masters when the generated transport key command is executed.

- 10 • V\_TPK, Transport Private Key. This is an RSA key used by a non-master module to decrypt the imported MKS key.
- U\_TPK, Transport Public Key. This is an RSA key used by a master module to encrypt an MKS key that will be distributed to another module.

15 The module's system software (CP/Q++) generates the following key during CP/Q++ initialization.

- PPD key. This is a DESkey generated by the CP/Q++ and used to encrypt keys that are stored in the module's flash memory. The key is not accessible outside the system software.

20 The module generates the following keys for use during secure sessions with the host computer.

- 25 • Session Master Keys. This is a set of two keys, generated for a given secure session, used to derive session transaction keys. One key is for authentication (DES MAC computation) and the other for security (Triple-DES encryption). The keys are destroyed at the conclusion of the secure session.
- 30 • Session Transaction Keys. These keys are used for a single transaction during a secure session. They are derived by a one-way function of the Session Master Keys combined with a transaction counter.

35 The following five keys are generated by a module when the initialize crypto-card command is executed.



- 1 • VDSK\_ipost, the DSA private key used by the modules to sign challenges during client registration. The key is output in a key token for distribution to other modules.
- 5 • UDSK\_ipost, the DSA public key that is imbedded in the client application software and is used to authenticate challenges signed by the module during client registration. The key is output from the module after generation.
- 10 • VRSK\_ipost, the RSA private key used by the modules to decrypt client secrets transmitted to the modules during client registration. The key is output in a key token for distribution to other modules.
- 15 • URSK\_ipost, the RSA public key that is imbedded in the client application software and is used to encrypt client secrets transmitted to the module during client registration. The key is output from the module after generation.
- 20 • MK\_chkpt, the DES MAC key used to authenticate a checkpoint database record when it is returned to a module from the database. This key is derived from VDSK\_ipost by hashing it using SHA-1 each time that VDSK\_ipost is imported by the module.

25 The following keys are generated by a module at the time that a PSD package, the database record containing a postage meter's data, is created.

- 30 • V\_psd, the DSA private key used to sign indicia created by this VBI meter. This key is stored in the meter's PSD package as a key token, encrypted by the MEK.
- U\_psd, the DSA public key used to authenticate the signature on indicia created by this VBI meter. This key is output from the module to the provider after generation.
- 35 • MK\_psd, the DES MAC key used to authenticate a PSD package when it is returned to a module from the database. This

1 key is derived from V\_psd by hashing it using SHA-1 each time that V\_psd is imported by the module.

- EDEK\_psd, the 3DES key-encrypting-key used to encrypt the client secrets transmitted to the module during client registration. This key is stored in the client's PSD package as a key token, encrypted by the MEK.

5 FIPS 140-1 allows key distribution to be performed by manual methods, automated methods, or a combination of automated and manual methods. Keys are input to a module when required to initialize the module and to initialize the PSD packages of each meter. These key transfers are not considered key distribution. Also, FIPS 140-1 allows key entry and output procedures to differ depending upon the key distribution technique employed. The cryptographic module does not implement manual key entry. All secret or private keys are input to or output from the module electronically and are encrypted.

15 The system of the present invention utilizes a plurality of cryptographic modules that need to work in concert. This entails creating a shared secret for all the modules. In one embodiment, key entry is required to initialize a new clone module for service at the service provider's facility. Preferably, only one module functions as a master module. The master module generates a Master Key Set (MKS). The exporting of the shares of the MKS keys requires dual control. The Security Officer should first issue a create MKS shares command to specify the number of shares to be created and to authorize the export of the shares.

25 In one embodiment, the module uses a Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PNRG) to generate the MKS, which contains two distinct keys:

1. Master Encryption Key (MEK): A 3DES key used to encrypt keys when stored outside the module.

1           2. Master Authentication Key (MAK): This is a key used to  
compute the DES MAC for signing keys when stored outside of  
the module.

5           The MKS is stored in a non-volatile memory (NVM) within the  
module.

10           When the required number of shares are input to a module,  
a Key Management Officer can then enter an export share command  
to export one of the MKS shares. Input as part of the export  
share command is the transport public key of the new module being  
cloned. This public key is used to encrypt each key share before  
it is exported and stored on a storage medium such as a floppy  
disk, a CDROM, or the like. After the last share is exported,  
the Master module returns to the operational state and will no  
longer output key shares.

15           For the modules that are not masters, the Security Officer  
uses the generate transport key command to request the module to  
generate the transport key pair. This command also establishes  
that the module is not a master module. The transport public key  
is output for use by a Key Management Officer when exporting MKS  
key shares from a Master module. To input MKS shares to a  
module, the Security Officer must send the start importing shares  
command to the destination module. Key Management Officers can  
then enter their shares from their floppy disks, CDROMs, or the  
like until all have been entered. The destination module uses  
its transport private key to decrypt the key shares. The process  
is completed when the Security Officer sends the combine shares  
command.

20           The MKS is used to generate external key tokens by MACing  
the key with the MAK and Triple-DES encrypting it with the MEK.  
After a new module has been loaded with the MKS, the Security  
Officer can use the initialize crypto-card command to export key  
tokens from the module or to load it with key tokens generated  
by another module.

1

In one embodiment for secure printing of postage values, the following four keys are input to a module using the initialize crypto-card command.

- 5 • VDSK\_ipost, the DSA private key used by modules to sign challenges during client registration.
- VRSK\_ipost, the RSA private key used by modules to decrypt client secrets transmitted to the module during client registration.
- 10 • U\_ca, the USPS Certificate Authority's X.509 certificate.
- UDSK\_auth, the DSA public key used to authenticate signatures on messages from the provider infrastructure.
- 15

At the time of customer registration, the key URSK\_ipost, embedded in the client computer cryptographic software is used to encrypt client secrets before transmitting them to the module. These secrets include:

20

- HMK, the client's MACing key. The key is used to generate a DES MAC for mutual authentication of messages between the client and the module.
- 25 • PW, the hash of the customer's passphrase. The hash of the passphrase is used to authenticate the customer to the module if the client's copy of HMK is lost.

30

The module uses the private key VRSK-ipost to decrypt these client secrets before storing them as an encrypted key token in the meter's PSD package.

35

Within the module, the permanently stored secret keys are stored in designated NVM locations that serve to adequately identify their function. Secret and private keys that are stored outside the module as part of a PSD package are contained in key

1 tokens. Key tokens are data structures that identify the keys  
and include other information relevant to the keys. The key  
tokens are authenticated by the MAK and encrypted by the MEK.  
5 When these keys are inside the module they are stored in  
designated locations in volatile memory.

The cryptographic module of the present invention provides  
the capability to zeroize all plaintext cryptographic keys and  
other unprotected critical security parameters within the module.  
10 For example, the IBM 4758 stores all plain text keys and other  
SRDI's in BBRAM (NVM). Zeroization of all BBRAM contents occurs  
if the module's tamper detection envelope senses intrusion. A  
system user can also destroy these SRID's by disconnecting the  
external batteries that provide backup power to the module.  
15 These features allow the 4758 to meet FIPS 140-1 requirements.  
FIPS 140-1 allows for a cryptographic module to output encrypted  
keys for archiving purposes. In one embodiment, each module  
implements key archiving mechanisms.

20 A state machine determines the availability of module  
commands in conjunction with the roles that a user takes up. In  
other words, the state and the current user role together provide  
sufficient information to decide whether an action is allowed or  
not. Most commands require authentication for transport from the  
25 host to the module. Therefore, an active session is derived  
requirement for execution of these commands. This requirement  
is explicitly verified by these commands, however.

Invalid data may lead to failure of execution. However,  
30 verification of validity is considered the first step in  
execution. The decision to start execution depends on the state  
and the user role alone; validity of input data does not play a  
role in that decision. The complete module state or the state  
of any module application may be composed of the module state as  
35 described in this document, complemented with other state

1 information maintained by other libraries. Exemplary states are described below.

5 Uninitialized state. This is the initial, state that the module is in immediately after loading the code and booting. No security related data has been loaded. The only available command is the Start Initializing command.

10 Initializing state is the state that the module is in during the initialization process. In this state, the access control database is initialized and the MKS is generated or its import is initiated. The module exits this state when an MKS is generated (next state: operational) or when a Transport Key Pair is generated (next state: importing shares).

15 Operational state. In this state, all normal operational commands can be executed. Depending on the user role(s) these can be administrative (change password), postage meter related, session management or auditing commands. In addition, certain key management commands (activation of a new MKS and deletion of a dormant MKS) are available. Finally, special commands transition to other states (administrative, exporting shares, importing shares) for special restricted commands.

25 Administrative state. This state includes all access control maintenance commands, such as adding, deleting, viewing and modifying user accounts. The module enters this state from Operational state when a Security Officer issues the Begin Admin command in operational state. It remains in this state until the Security Officer issues the End Admin command (next state: operational).

30 Exporting Shares state. This state allows the Key Custodians to export shares of the MKS. The module enters

1           this state from operational state when a Security Officer  
          issues the Create MKS Shares command. It remains in this  
          state until all shares have been exported (via the Export  
5       MKS Share command) or the Abort Export command is issued  
          (in both cases, the next state is operational). If the  
          Abort Export command is issued before all shares are  
          exported, the exported shares may be useless.

10          Importing Shares state. This state accepts the import of  
          shares of the MKS. The module enters this state from  
          operational state when a Security Officer issues a Start  
          Importing MKS command. It remains in this state until a  
          Combine Shares command is issued (next state: operational  
15       if an MKS exists after completion, else error).

20          Error state The coprocessor enters this state on (fatal)  
          errors. Depending on the severity of the error, it should  
          be cleared by rebooting, or the coprocessor should be reset  
          (next state: uninitialized). Only audit entry creation and  
          session commands are possible in this state.

25          FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary finite state machine. The  
          logon and logoff functions, session management commands, access  
          control queries, and audit entry creation are available in all  
          states except uninitialized and error.

30          Within any thread in the module, it is not possible to  
          interrupt processing, and to resume processing at another  
          instruction than where it was interrupted. The only exception  
          to this rule is rebooting. Rebooting interrupts processing, and  
          starta at a given fixed location in the application.

35          In one embodiment, two variables hold the current state  
          information: Current State and Persistent State. The latter is  
          stored in NVM. This allows for atomic state transitions and for  
          retaining state information across rebooting. Atomic state

1 transitions can be implemented by first updating Current State,  
then performing all required actions, and finally updating  
Persistent State. If the module is rebooted during this  
5 sequence, the old state is retained in Persistent State. Thus,  
if Persistent State has been updated, one is assured that the  
full transaction has been executed. In addition, it can be used  
to retain Error state information as required.

10 Before executing any function, the module verifies whether  
a reboot has occurred by checking a boot detection flag in the  
NVM. A reboot clears NVM, thus also clearing this flag.  
Therefore, the first call to the module after a boot will find  
this flag cleared. After performing any required initialization,  
the flag can be set.

15 Initialization includes the following boot detection. When  
the reboot flag is found set, no action is taken. When the  
reboot flag is found cleared, the value of the Persistent State  
variable is examined, and the following is done.

20 If it is Error: a fatal error has occurred, and Current  
State is set to Error.

If it is Initializing: Persistent and Current State are set  
to Error, as this is a fatal error.

25 If it is Importing Shares, and if there is no active MKS,  
Persistent and Current State are set to Error, as this is  
a fatal error. (If the module contains a valid active MKS,  
both Current State and Persistent State are set to  
30 Operational, see below.)

If it is Exporting Shares: Current State is set to Error,  
as this is a non-fatal error.

35 If it is Uninitialized: no successful initialization has  
been performed and Current State is set to Uninitialized.



1           If it is Importing Shares, and if the module contains a  
valid active MKS, both Current State and Persistent State  
are set to Operational.

5           Else: both Current State and Persistent State are set to  
Operational.

          Unless specified otherwise, all state transitions mentioned  
in this document are performed by first updating Current State,  
10       and then updating Persistent State. Atomic actions are enclosed  
within such a state transition.

          The module is in Uninitialized state immediately after  
loading all software and booting. In the Uninitialized state,  
15       no commands can be accepted, except the "Start Initialization"  
command. This command erases all non-volatile memory. This  
erases all data and keys present in the module, in particular the  
Master Keys and the access control database; set the internal  
module clock; creates the Audit Signing Key; creates the first  
20       audit entry, capturing this event; and transitions to the  
Initializing state.

          Preferably, the only way to return to Uninitialized state  
is to reset the module. This together with the fact that  
initialization always erases all data, ensures no data survives  
25       a reset. The Uninitialized state serves as a shield to make sure  
no transitions to Initializing state are possible from other  
states without losing all data and keys.

          The Initializing state contains those commands that are to  
30       be executed once in the lifetime of a module. The only way to  
enter Initializing state is by issuing the "Start Initialization"  
command from the Uninitialized state. This ensures that upon  
entry to the Initializing state, no data or keys are retained.  
Here, the module is in an entirely clean state. In Initializing  
35       state, the following actions/commands are allowed:

- 1           •     Get Status
- Initialize Access control database
- 5          •     Logon
- Logoff
- Query Current User Role
- 10         •     Query Current User ID
- All Session Management commands
- Audit entry creation
- 15         •     Generate Master Key Set
- Generate Transport Key Pair.

20           The last two commands represent the only means to establish  
a Master Key Set (MKS) in a module. A module can either generate  
a Master Key Set (MKS) itself, or it can import one and encrypt  
it under its own Transport Public Key (TPK). These two commands  
perform the generation respectively and prepare the import (by  
generating the import encryption key pair). In summary, the  
25         Initializing state serves to initialize the module and the  
sharing of the MKS. These initializations are one-time  
activities; the former mainly because there is no need to repeat  
it; the latter because it is not allowed to happen repeatedly.

30           All normal, operational commands are executed in Operational  
state. That is, Operational state contains commands implementing  
all actions not related to initialization of a module, the  
maintenance of the access control database, or key management  
(with the exception of key usage). The following are examples  
of commands in Operational state associated with different  
35         functions.

1

- Access Control

Begin Admin (transition to Administrative state).

5

Logon

Logoff

Query Current User Role

10

Query Current User ID

View Access control database

Change password

15

Set clock

Get Status

- Session Management

20

Open Session

Close Session

Compute Session MAC

25

Verify Session MAC

Session Encrypt

Session Decrypt

30

- Key Management

Key management related to cloning and management of the MKS:

Export Transport Public Key

35

1                   Start Importing MKS (transition to Importing  
                    Shares state)

5                   Create MKS Shares (transition to Exporting Shares  
                    state)

                    Generate MKS

10                   Activate MKS (deactivates old MKS, if any, and  
                    activates a new one)

                    Delete dormant MKS

Usage of the MKS:

15                   Global Encrypt and MAC

                    Global Decrypt and MAC

                    Compute MAC

20                   Verify MAC

MKS Rollover:

25                   Encryption and MAC Translation (decrypt and  
                    verify MAC under old MKS; compute MAC and re-  
                    encrypt under new MKS)

- Audit Support

                    Audit Entry creation

30                   Audit Key Creation

                    Export of the Audit Verification Key

35                   All administrative commands supporting access control are  
                    executed in Administrative state. That is, Administrative state  
                    contains commands implementing:

- 1           •     Creation of an account
- Deletion of an account
- 5           •     Modification of an account
- Viewing the access control database. This command lists all users and their roles, account expiration, last access, but not the user passwords.
- 10          •     End Admin (transition back to Operational state).
- Logon
- Logoff
- 15          •     Query Current User Role
- Query Current User ID
- Set clock
- 20          •     Get Status
- All session management commands
- Audit entry creation.
- 25          Preferably, all these commands (except session key usage) are audited.

As shown in FIG. 6, Administrative state is entered by the Start Admin command, issued by a Security Officer. The administrative commands in Administrative state require Administrator user role. This separation of roles ensures dual control. Secondly, the transition to administrative state will ensure that no operational commands can be issued by the Administrator (separation of duties).

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The Exporting Shares state exports encrypted shares of a Master Key Set. When the last share in a secret sharing scheme is exported, the module transitions to operational state. All these commands are audited. (Audit entry creation.) Only an exportable MKS can be exported this way (i.e., internally generated or imported as exportable; by default an imported MKS is a retained key). The export is initiated by a Security Officer issuing the Create MKS Shares command in Operational state. This command changes state to Exporting Shares. The actual export of the encrypted shares is done through the Export Share command, issued by a Key Custodian. Encryption of the shares is under the Transport Public Key. This key is provided by the Key Custodian as an input parameter to the Export Shares command. Rebooting while in Exporting Shares state may be a fatal error.

The following commands are available in the Exporting Shares state.

- Logon
- Logoff
- Query Current User Role
- Query Current User ID
- Export Share
- Abort Export
- Get Status
- All Session Management commands
- Audit entry creation.

In the Importing Shares state, a module imports encrypted

1 shares of an MKS. The encryption is done under the Transport  
Key. Importing shares state is entered by Issuing the Start  
Importing MKS command. The actual import is performed by  
5 repeating the Import Share command as required. Combination of  
the shares to a MKS transitions to Operational state is also  
possible. All these commands are audited. (Audit entry  
creation.

10 The following commands are available in the Importing Shares  
state.

- Logon
- Logoff
- 15 • Query Current User Role
- Query Current User ID
- Export Transport Public Key
- 20 • Import Share
- Combine Shares
- Get Status
- 25 • All Session Management commands
- Audit entry creation.

30 In Error state, no cryptographic operations may be  
performed. Thus, the only commands available in the Error state  
are Get Status, Access Control Queries. A reset erases all NVM  
and changes to Uninitialized state. Fatal errors set both  
Persistent State and Current State to Error. This ensures that  
rebooting will not clear the error. Therefore, the only way to  
35 clear fatal errors is a Reset command, or by a complete re-

1 initialization of the module by other means (both methods change  
state to Uninitialized). Non-fatal errors only set Current State  
to Error; the Persistent State is not modified. A subsequent  
5 reboot clears the error, unless a boot error occurs. All Module  
command requests in Error state, with the exception of Get  
Status, return an error and do not output any data. Error states  
are preferably non-fatal, with the following exceptions (i.e.  
these only set Current State to Error):

10 failure in Audit Entry Creation which doesn't breaks the  
audit chain; and

detection of Exporting Shares state during boot-up

15 Throughout the lifecycle of a module, its software keeps  
track of the module's present operational state and allows only  
the operations that are allowed for these module states. Each  
PSD package also contains information to define its present  
operational state. When the module is loaded with a PSD's  
package, module software will only perform operations that are  
20 allowed for the present state of that PSD. The following  
paragraphs describe the states of the module and the PSD package  
throughout their operating life.

25 When the module is first operated after its software is  
loaded, it starts in the uninitialized state. Preferably, the  
only command that it will accept is the start initialization  
command and the start initialization command will only be  
executed if the module is in the uninitialized state. During  
this phase of life, the Module is not considered to be a crypto  
module and no authentication is required to issue this command.  
30 The start initialization command first erases all non-volatile  
memory to destroy any cryptographic keys or access account  
database entries that may persist from previous use of the  
module. When memory erasure is completed, the module transitions  
to the initializing state.

35 The Initialized state includes commands that can be executed



1 only once in the life of the module. Because this state can only  
be entered from the uninitialized state, an existing module  
cannot be modified by using these commands. Within this state  
5 the access account database is initialized. If a master module  
is being created, the master key set (MKS) is generated and the  
operational state is entered. If the module is not a master, the  
transport key pair is generated and the Importing shares state  
is entered.

10 Preferably, the module Exporting Shares state can only be  
entered from the Operational state. Once the master module  
generates the MKS it can export it to another module. In one  
embodiment, this is accomplished by using an n of m Shamir secret  
sharing technique, as follows:

15 1. A target (clone) module is initialized, following the  
steps described above.

2. The Security Officer logs on to the newly initialized  
target Module and issues a command to generate a transport  
key pair (TPK). The TPK is a RSA public key used for  
20 transporting an MKS previously generated by the master  
module. The private portion of the TPK is retained in the  
new module and can never be exported from the module that  
generated it. This control ensures that MKS export is  
always destined for one well-determined target module. The  
25 public portion of the TPK is saved on to a floppy disk, a  
CDROM, or the like.

3. The public portion of the TPK is saved onto a storage  
medium such as a floppy, CDROM, or the like and physically  
30 carried over to the machine housing the master module. The  
Security Officer logs on to the master module and issues  
the create MKS shares command. The create MKS shares  
command accepts two arguments: (1) the number of shares to  
be created (n, one share per key custodian) and (2) the  
35 threshold number of shares required to recombine the

1 shares. A successful create MKS command results in n  
number of shares, where n is greater than or equal to 2.

5 4. A Key Custodian logs in and initiates the export MKS  
shares command on the master Module and chooses whether the  
exported key pair should be an exportable or retained key  
pair for the destination module. An exportable key pair  
permits the destination module to export key shares in the  
10 same manner as the original master module. With a retained  
key pair, the new cloned module cannot export key shares to  
other cryptographic modules. The export MKS shares command  
validates the current key custodian and then encrypts an  
MKS share with the TPK. The TPK-encrypted share is saved  
15 to a floppy, a CDROM, or the like. This procedure is  
repeated for each key custodian specified in step 3, above.

The module Importing Shares State can be entered from the  
Initializing state (to load the MKS for the first time) or from  
the Operational state (to load a replacement MKS). The following  
20 describe in more detail the importation of the MKS key shares for  
generation of the master key set in a module. Once the master  
Module encrypts the MKS shares and saves them to floppies, the  
shares can be imported into the target module.

25 1. The Security Officer logs into the target module and  
initiates the start importing MKS shares command.

2. The first Key Custodian inserts their MKS share floppy  
or CDROM, logs in, and issues the import MKS share command.  
The target module reads in the first share. This procedure  
is repeated for each Key Custodian.

30 When the final Key Custodian has finished entering the key  
share, the Security Officer logs in and issues the combine MKS  
shares command. The combine MKS shares command causes the target  
module to unencrypt each share and combine them to create the  
MKS. The shares are destroyed following this procedure. The MKS  
35 is stored in the NVM as described above.

1           Once in the Operational state, the module is capable of  
completing its remaining initialization steps. The security  
officer sends an initialize crypto-card command to load all other  
5       required module shared keys (These are described in the Key  
Management section). The administrator can enter the access  
control data for all other personnel that require authenticated  
role access to the module.

10          When the module is initialized, it does not become a PSD  
until PSD packages are created. A PSD package is created using  
the initialize PSD command. This creates a data structure that  
contains the PSD package data elements. One data element is the  
present state of the PSD. The module will only allow the PSD to  
perform operations that are allowed for its present state. When  
15       the initialize PSD process is completed, the PSD state changes  
to the raw state.

20          In one embodiment, the PSD package for each meter user  
contains all data needed to restore the meter's PSD to its last  
known state when it is next loaded into a module. This includes  
the items that the IBIP Performance Criteria specifies to be  
stored inside the PSD, information required to return the PSD to  
a valid state when the record is reloaded from the database, and  
data needed for record security and administrative purposes. In  
this embodiment, the PSD package includes the following items:

- 25       • Ascending and descending registers
- Device ID
- Indicia key certificate serial number
- 30       • Licensing ZIP code
- Key token for the indicia signing key
- The user secrets, (the client DES MAC key and the SHA-1  
hash of the client's passphrase).
- 35       • Key token for EDEK\_psd, the key for encrypting user secrets

- Data needed to maintain operating continuity includes:
- Date and time of the last PSD transaction
- The last challenge received from the client
- The operational state of the PSD (leased, withdrawn, etc.)
- Expiration dates for keys
- The passphrase repetition list (eliminates reuse of recent passphrases)

The IBIP Performance Criteria specifies that the PSD should store the public key certificate for the USPS CA. Because all meters require this information, it serves no purpose to repeat this data in each PSD package. Instead, the certificate for the USPS CA public key is stored in the memory of all the modules.

The following describes the PSD package states.

- Raw state. As a result of initialization the meter serial number is assigned, the postal registers are set to zero, the PSD keys are generated, and all other initializing steps are performed. The provider receives the PSD public key and device ID needed to obtain the PSD's public key certificate. Preferably, the only command that can be executed while in the raw state is the authorize PSD command.
- Unleased state. The authorize PSD command loads the PSD public key certificate and changes the PSD state from raw to the unleased state. Preferably, the only command that can be executed while in the unleased state is the configure PSD command.
- Assigned state. The configure PSD command assigns the PSD to a customer, allows entry of the customer shared secrets, and places the PSD in the assigned state. When the customer's postal license is issued, the authorize customer command enters the customer's originating zip code and

1 places the PSD in the leased state.

- Leased state. Once in the leased state the PSD is ready for the customer to use. The meter can begin printing indicia once the first postage value download had been completed.
- Password Reset state. This is a temporary state to allow a lost password to be replaced.
- Withdrawn state. The user's account has been closed or suspended. This state is entered from the leased state or pwreset state by executing the create refund indicium command. The PSD package remains in the database where it can be accessed by the server but after entering the withdrawn state the Module will no longer execute any PSD command when loaded with this PSD package.

The PSD packages are stored outside the modules when not being used and the module is able to detect when record storage problems have occurred. In one embodiment, a Redundant Array of Independent Disks (RAID) and a database server are used together to provide reliable operation of the database. Multiple copies of each record are maintained and a locking system is used to prevent more than one postal server from simultaneously accessing one meter's PSD package. If a partial failure of the RAID occurs, the system transparently switches to backup records.

In one embodiment, the cryptographic modules store up to five transactions in a respective internal register. The number of transactions compared in the verification process system may be set by the system administrator. A verification process compares a predetermined number of last transactions. The database subsystem stores a table that preferably includes the module(s) present in the Postal Server subsystem, the module serial numbers, the time of the last transaction the module processed, the date of the last transaction the module processed and the value of the last transaction the cryptographic module

processed. Other values related to a transaction and a module can also be saved for verification purposes. An example of the module table, where the Postal Server subsystem has four modules, is illustrated below.

Cryptographic module	Cryptographic module Serial. #	Transaction Time	Transaction Date	Transaction Value
1	34576590	11:53 PM	08/06/99	\$ 0.33
2	34582152	07:30 AM	08/05/99	\$ 7.55
3	34593104	03:00 PM	08/02/99	\$ 3.45
4	34593992	11:22 AM	08/03/99	\$ 5.78

When a cryptographic module loads a new PSD out of the Database subsystem (performing a transaction), the module's register, containing the last transaction's time, date and value, is verified against that module's entry in the Database subsystem's module table. The time, date or value for each transaction stored in each module should match the corresponding values for the respective module stored in the database for the verification process to be successfully completed. Cryptographic modules do not load new PSD transactions unless the verification process has been successfully completed. If any of the compared values is found to be different, preferably the whole system shuts down until authorized personnel can investigate the situation. In one embodiment, the threshold in the system is adjustable so that the system may be set to shut down if one, two or more modules fail the verification process.

With the success of the authorization state, the client software not only trusts the cryptographic module, but also shares a common HMK with the cryptographic module, which it uses to sign and challenge each successive message. FIG. 5 is an exemplary embodiment illustrating client software and cryptographic module (PSD) communication during the operational

1 state. Client software 503 sends a new challenge message to  
cryptographic module 502, as shown by 501. The cryptographic  
module responds by signing the challenge with the shared HMK and  
5 then sends this ciphertext back to the client software, along  
with its own challenge, as shown by 504. Client software 503  
compares the ciphertext of the challenge it originally sent to  
the cryptographic module, and also signs the message received  
from the cryptographic module.

10 If the signatures compare, the client software trusts the  
cryptographic module for this transaction. Client software 503  
uses the cryptographic module challenge message to authenticate  
itself to cryptographic module 502. Client software 503 now  
sends the signed challenge that cryptographic module 502 had  
15 sent, with the addition of the client software local record of  
the user's AR and DR, as shown by 505.

The client software also sends a cleartext of the challenge  
and the transaction message, as shown by 506. Next, the client  
software sends a Hash Message Authentication Code (HMAC) for all  
20 of the data sent in 505 and 506, using shared HMK, as shown by  
507. HMAC is a digital signature created using a hash algorithm  
with an arbitrary message and the secret key (HMK). The client  
software sends the original arbitrary message and the HMAC to  
Postal Server via the network. HMK, as the HMAC Key, stays in  
25 the client software 503. The cryptographic module 502 already  
has a copy of HMK because it was sent over to Postal Server  
during the user registration process. In another embodiment,  
Data Encryption Standard Message Authentication Code (DES MAC)  
is used instead of HMAC.

30 In one embodiment, the checkpoint concept operates in the  
following manner. Each module retains in its memory records  
relating to the three most recent transactions that modified a  
PSD package. For example, these records include the following  
35 data items:

1

- PSD meter ID
- Transaction type
- Transaction amount

5

- PSD AR value
- PSD DR value
- Module serial number

10

- Date/time stamp (for record replay detection)
- Module total amount reset
- Module total amount printed
- Module total amount refunded

15

The record of the most recent transaction is also output to the database and is protected from modification by a DES MAC generated using the key HMK\_chkpt. When a PSD transaction is to be performed, the checkpoint record from the database is input along with the PSD package for the meter. Preferably, all IBIP commands to the modules are handled by the function sdx\_dispatch. Within dispatch, the checkpoint record from the database is compared with the most recent checkpoint record stored in the module memory. If they match, it is highly likely that no switchover of the database (resulting in lost records) has occurred. The module then trusts that the PSD package is up to date and allows the IBIP command to be executed. When the IBIP command is completed, the checkpoint record is updated and output to the server for database storage along with the updated PSD package.

20

25

30

35

In the case of create indicium commands, the server first confirms that the updated records have been stored on the database before the indicium is transmitted to the client for printing. (Server transaction logs keep a record of all messages sent to clients.) In the case of the provider commanding postage value download or create refund indicium, the server reports an



1 error if the database fails to correctly store the updated  
checkpoint record and PSD package.

5 If the comparison of internal and external checkpoint  
records does not match, the module will not execute the IBIP  
command and an error code is returned to the server. The server  
then sends a command called "Auto-Recover module Checkpoint" to  
the module. This command allows a controlled rollback to an  
10 older checkpoint if the external checkpoint record matches either  
of the two older checkpoint records stored in the module internal  
memory. The module updates its internal records using data from  
the accepted checkpoint and outputs audit log records to document  
the more recent PSD transactions that are to be discarded  
(transactions more recent than the accepted checkpoint). If none  
15 of the module's internal checkpoint records match the record  
input from the database, auto-recovery fails and an error is  
returned to the server. This module is now effectively inhibited  
from processing PSD packages and operator intervention, using the  
disaster recovery process, is needed to return it to operation.

20 In summary, the checkpoint validation and auto-recovery  
processes allows the module to verify that the database providing  
records is up to date and to automatically resynchronize the  
module with the database if possible.

25 An Audit Log Verification protects PSD Package Replay. Use  
of a DES MEC to authenticate a PSD package ensures that the  
record originated from a module with knowledge of the client's  
package DES MAC key. The DES MAC verifies that the data within  
the record has not been modified since the DES MAC was generated.  
30 But because the DES MAC cannot ensure that the record is the most  
recent update of the client's data, other safeguards need to be  
used to prevent or detect substitution of a record created at an  
earlier time. The module addresses this problem by creating a  
cryptographically protected audit log entry each time a PSD  
35 package is modified by a module. The command

1       scaaeCreateAuditEntry is used to create the audit record. An  
Audit Log Verification protects PSD Package Replay. Use of a DES  
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5       originated from a module with knowledge of the client's package  
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recent update of the client's data, other safeguards need to be  
10       used to prevent or detect substitution of a record created at an  
earlier time. The module addresses this problem by creating a  
cryptographically protected audit log entry each time a PSD  
package is modified by a module. The command  
scaaeCreateAuditEntry is used to create the audit record.

15       The initialize cryptocard or update cryptocard commands  
perform the initializations. Limits are set for the minimum and  
maximum value of indicium that can be printed. The USPS  
certificate authority public key certificate is loaded. The  
provider public key is loaded. Private keys used during new  
20       customer registration are loaded. These commands are issued by  
the Security Officer.

25       The initialize PSD command assigns the device ID, set the  
postal registers to zero and generates the PSD public keys. This  
command is not authenticated but can only be executed once in the  
life of a PSD.

30       The authorize PSD command loads the PSD's public key  
certificate. The PSD's certificate is authenticated by the CA  
certificate, and the device ID and public key from the  
certificate are verified to match those contained in the PSD  
package.

35       The configure PSD command enters the new customer's customer  
ID and receives the encrypted secrets from the customer. The  
module decrypts the secrets using VRSK\_ipost. Preferably, this  
command is not authenticated but the response returned to the

1 customer is DES MAC'ed by the module with the CDSK\_client key  
just received. The customer PC software verifies this DES MAC  
to ensure that the module has received the CDSK\_client key  
5 correctly.

The authorize customer command enters the originating zip  
code after the server receives the meter license and then the  
maximum descending register limit is set. This command is  
authenticated as a provider role command from the provider's  
10 signature using the key UDSK\_auth.

As described above, the cryptographic modules use roles and  
services to control access to the module and to specify which  
services (commands) are available to the user. Services of  
concern are those that access security parameters or postal  
15 financial data protected by the module. Each module supports  
many roles. In one embodiment, access control is accomplished  
as follows.

Authentication may be accomplished by using a secure  
session. For example, the roles of Security Officer, Key  
Custodian, Administrator, and Auditor are authenticated after a  
secure session between the user's PC and the module has been  
established. When the user issues an scasmOpenSession command,  
application software on the user's PC and corresponding software  
25 in the module perform the session opening process. An anonymous  
Diffie-Hellman key generation protocol is used to establish a set  
of session keys (triple DES keys for encryption and MAC'ing) that  
are used during the session. The session keys are not used  
directly but instead unique keys, derived from the session keys,  
30 are used for each successive message.

Once a secure session is established, the user sends the  
scaacLogon command containing the user ID and user password. The  
module uses its access account database to verify the user data  
received and to select the role that this user is allowed to  
35 enter. The user can now send the module any command allowable for

1 the selected role. In one embodiment, the module design limits each user to a single role and will only allow one user to be logged on at a time.

5 Session management provides security services to the communications between the host and the module. Session management will establish a secure channel between the host application and the module application. This channel provides authentication and optional confidentiality for the data  
10 exchanged through it. In particular, all command requests and responses, except those for opening a session, are protected by a MAC. This provides authentication to the command. The host and module can verify that it is their counterpart that issued the command because no other entity can generate the MAC.  
15 Optionally, the command data can also be encrypted. This provides confidentiality to the channel.

All commands from the host are initiated by a user that is authorized to execute this command on the module. That is, all host-initiated commands require an active user with an  
20 appropriate role (authorized to issue the given command). Except for Default role, this implies that a user (with that role) should be currently logged on. For all users with roles other than Default, the session management is closely tied to user logon. A session should be established before the logon and it  
25 lasts while the user is logged on. The session can be terminated after the user logs off. Logon fails if no session is established; session termination fails if a user is still logged on. Similarly, any module command that requires session security (encryption or a MAC) is aborted if this mechanism is not used.

30 An active session is instantiated by active session master keys. These keys are exchanged between host and module application at session set-up, and they are destroyed at session termination. All data transmitted between the host and the module within a certain session is protected by these session  
35 master keys. All data is authenticated (by means of a MAC); in

1 addition, some data is encrypted to preserve confidentiality.

Preferably, session master keys are not used directly. Instead, a temporary key is derived from a session master key for  
5 each transmission. This transaction key is then used to MAC or encrypt the transmitted data. The transaction keys are derived as a one-way function of the session master keys and a nonce (e.g., a transaction sequence counter). This set-up with session master keys and derived transaction keys is straightforward, and  
10 it protects the session master key. The transaction keys are protected by limiting the amount of ciphertext available for attacks. In addition, even if they would be revealed, the use of a good one-way function together with nonce for the derivation of the transaction keys are sufficient to secure the session  
15 master key.

The Session Master Keys are obtained from an anonymous, unauthenticated key exchange. In one embodiment, the key exchange protocol is an anonymous (ephemeral-ephemeral) Diffie-Hellman protocol executed between the host application and the  
20 module application. The system parameters (a strong prime  $p$ , and a generator  $g$ ) are fixed. That is, they are hard-coded into the software at both ends. This protocol establishes a shared secret that can be used to create a secure channel between the two end entities.

25 Anonymous Diffie-Hellman does not provide authentication of the end entities or key confirmation. However, the module can implicitly authenticate the host via user logon and application data authentication provided from outside of the module. Similarly, the host implicitly authenticates the module by  
30 verifying that it can process the application data. Finally, key confirmation is achieved at the first exchanged message.

Session Management functions include:

- Session Management Services

- 1           •     Open Session
- Close Session
- 5         •     Session Security:
  - Compute Session MAC
  - Verify Session MAC
  - Session Encrypt
  - 10       •     Session Decrypt

Role Access may be accomplished by Command Authentication. Because many customers need to be provided rapid access to the module, commands from each customer are individually authenticated to provide access control. Each customer has a DES MAC key (CDSK\_client) and generates a DES MAC for each command sent to the module. The module uses its copy of CDSK\_client from the customer's PSD package to perform the command authentication. This meets the requirements for identity-based role authentication. Individual command authentication ensures that each customer is authorized to enter the customer role and that the command is an authorized service of the customer role.

The provider role also uses command authentication. Provider commands are signed with the key VDSK\_auth. The e-commerce server provides the interface to the USPS infrastructure and also functions as the provider when interacting with PSD Packages. When a customer's postal license is approved, the provider sends an authorize\_customer command to the module to store the licensing zip code and maximum descending register value in the customer's PSD Package. Completion of the authorize\_customer command places the PSD Package in the *leased* state, allowing it to begin operating.

When the e-commerce server is notified that the customer has deposited funds to buy postage, a download postage value command, signed by the provider key, VDSK\_auth, is sent to the module. The Certificate Authority role is used to load the PSD's public

1 key certificate. This command (authorize PSD) is authenticated when the signature on the certificate provided with the command is authenticated by the CA certificate contained in the module.

5 Some commands from the server to the module do not require authentication. These commands are used to prepare a PSD for operation , to request status from a PSD, or to facilitate system operation, for example. None affect data within operating PSD packages.

10 When the server receives a message from the client requesting an indicium, it forwards the request to the module using the create indicium command. Whenever a client's PSD package is required to perform a module service, the server provides it to the module with the command. The PSD package and the client-provided data elements for the indicium are then used by the module in the following way.

15 1. The indicia signing key token is decrypted and the DES MAC key is derived from it. This key is used to verify the DES MAC for the package.

20 2. The PSD state is checked. Preferably, the package should be in the leased state for this command to be executed.

3. The meter number in the command should match the meter number in the PSD package.

25 4. The challenge included in the client message is verified.

30 5. The key token containing the client secrets is decrypted and the DES MAC on the client's request is verified to authenticate the client with his PSD package. This also authenticates the command into the user role.

After the above checks are completed, the module is assured of the identity of the client making the request, and is certain that it has a valid PSD package for that client. The module can now perform the requested register modification process.

35 6. The value of the indicium is then checked to ensure it

1 is within the minimum and maximum limits enforced by the module.

7. The DR is checked to see if it contains sufficient value for the indicium.

5 If the above tests are successfully completed, the module completes the indicium creation process:

8. The indicium value is subtracted from the DR and added to the AR.

10 9. The data elements for the indicium are assembled and the indicium signature is generated.

10. The message that will be sent to the client is assembled. In addition to the indicium, this includes the challenge received from the client in the indicium creation request and a new challenge generated by the module that will be returned in the next message from the client. A DES MAC for this message is generated using the client's CDSK\_client key.

11. The PSD package and checkpoint record are updated and DES MAC's are generated for both.

12. The audit log record is then generated.

To broaden the appeal of the IBIP architecture to the small business and enterprise market, one embodiment of the present invention allows multiple employees within a company to access a meter registered to that company as shown in FIG. 8. This embodiment supports such an architecture by leveraging the existing security characteristics of the Postage Server Cryptomodule. In particular, the invention employs identity-based authentication, which is needed to meet the FIPS 140-1 security level 4 requirements. As depicted in FIG. 8, multiple users within an enterprise account are connected via the Internet and a firewall to the Postal server, Postal Transaction server, Provider server, and e-commerce server.

In a single user model where there is a direct one-to-one



1 mapping from customer to PSD, only a single secret needs to be  
shared between the individual and the cryptographic module. This  
secret allows the PSD to authenticate the communication with the  
5 user. To provide this capability for multiple users, the PSD  
needs to have access to their secrets as well. In this  
embodiment of the present invention, the PSD supports the ability  
to share secrets with multiple users, so that it may perform  
identity-based authentication of these users. To support this  
10 capability, existing services are modified for them to support  
multiple secrets. Preferably no change is necessary to the  
secure protocol the system uses to communicate with the user.

Additional user management capabilities support multiple  
users in a PSD. This is provided through the addition of new  
15 services needed to support the administration of a PSD's  
authorized users. Also, a new role called "customer  
administrator", is added that has the authority to perform the  
new services. This embodiment supports multiple users per PSD,  
supports multiple machines per PSD. In this embodiment,  
20 preferably, all users are within the same license. Preferably  
there is no additional restrictions on a user's capabilities.

In one embodiment, the system of the present invention  
allows multiple individuals to function as a single customer by  
separating the user interface function of the host system from  
the other core functions. An individual interacts with the  
25 machine performing the user interface function, which in turn,  
then communicates with the machine performing the other core  
functions. The machine performing all core functions of the host  
system, excluding the user interface, is called a gateway  
30 machine. This machine acts, on behalf of the individuals, to  
perform all customer functions. Multiple individuals are  
communicating with the gateway from different machines, each of  
which is performing the user interface function of the host  
system. These machines are called interface machines.

35 In this embodiment of the present invention, the gateway is

1 performing the user authentication function. As such, the  
gateway is responsible for supporting secure communication  
between the customer and its PSD. This means that the gateway  
5 performs the authentication of all messages sent to and received  
from the PSD.

As previously mentioned, the gateway also performs all other  
core functions of the host system (excluding the user interface  
function). Performing these functions at the gateway provides  
10 many benefits due to its centralized nature, including  
consolidated usage logging and simpler configuration management.

A customer entity is responsible for the security of the  
host system used to access the system. In this embodiment, a  
gateway and one or more interface machines embody the host  
15 system. To provide the same level of security as that afforded  
by a single machine model, it is necessary for the communication  
between the interface machines and the gateway to be private and  
tamper-resistant with respect to the community of users accessing  
the host system.

20 When and if the interface machines and the gateway all  
reside on a network private to the user community sharing the  
PSD, typically, no additional security is necessary to protect  
their communication. For example, a corporate LAN is typically  
protected with a firewall that prevents the machines within the  
25 private network from being accessed externally.

In this embodiment, the mechanism by which a customer  
submits a request to purchase postage to the provider  
infrastructure is performed on the gateway machine.  
Additionally, the corresponding purchase approval and download  
30 of postage value to the PSD is performed by the provider  
infrastructure and is preferably unaffected by the introduction  
of the gateway component. FIG. 9 shows multiple users using a  
gateway server to generate secure indicium bitmaps. Users can  
be connected to the gateway system via a private network or using  
35 a secure channel such as SSL if they are using a public network

1 to access the gateway system. Users can print the indicium  
generated from the gateway system using network printers or local  
printers that are available. Also, they can use printers  
5 connected to the gateway system.

In one embodiment, an IBI solution that allows users to use  
IBI from within a standard web browser tool is used. However,  
running in the browser environment where the UI and potentially  
code are delivered dynamically over the Internet brings with it  
10 additional security requirements. Improperly designed browser-  
based IBI systems could allow a number of attacks over the  
network that are not possible in an application-based system.  
These include the theft of indicia, substitution of values in  
indicia (printing something different than the user requested),  
15 substitution of values in postage purchases, and the theft of  
personal information. Generally, printing of indicia can be  
broken down into the following exemplary steps: entry of values  
into UI, generation of indicium by PSD, and Printing.

Typically, the security of an IBI system is dependent on the  
security of the steps above. In an application-based product these  
steps are either contained within one cryptoboundary or protected by  
a private, tamper resistant communication mechanism (e.g., SSL).  
There is a high degree of assurance that what is requested is what is  
printed and that no one is able to intercept the indicium. A browser  
25 plug-in that displays its own native code UI for collecting data for  
the indicium and prints the indicium itself is shown in FIG. 10.  
This browser offers the same protections as an application.  
Untrusted code (e.g., JavaScript) cannot access the data in the UI  
and transparently modify or steal it.

30 A UI-less (also known as, "headless") browser plug-in that  
generates and prints indicia with the UI provided by web pages is  
potentially unsafe. A plug-in installed in this manner is visible to  
all web pages, not just to pages from the original site. This allows  
attacks on the first arrow. Input can safely be taken from a web  
page, but only by providing a way to ensure only authorized pages can  
35

1 create and print indicia. It is possible to ensure that the plug-in  
is being called by an authorized web page by having the plug-in check  
the browser's Document Object Model to check to see if the page was  
5 delivered by SSL (to eliminate spoofing) and whether it came from an  
authorized domain (e.g., \*.stamps.com). If both of these are true,  
then the plug-in can trust the web page as its UI because the web  
page has been strongly authenticated to be from an authorized source.

This can also be accomplished by having the customer's web  
10 browser connect to a web server (proxy) running within the same  
cryptoboundary, as shown in FIG. 10. Preferably, the proxy only  
allows connections to authorized domains via SSL. In order to ensure  
that the proxy is only receiving requests from authorized domains, it  
is necessary for the proxy to authenticate that the request came from  
15 a page it delivered to the browser. The easiest way to accomplish  
this is to only accept requests over the same connection the page was  
delivered on, but other authentication methods are possible. This  
browser-based design has generally greater security than application-  
based designs.

20 For authentication, each user has a unique user ID and their own  
password. Preferably, user administration may only be performed in  
the cryptographic module. Also, client transactions are  
authenticated to a specific user. For access control, the system is  
capable of granting/revoking PSD privileges (e.g., create indicia,  
25 reset password, retrieve status, retrieve UDSKpsd), and  
granting/revoking administrative privileges (e.g., add user, delete  
user, modify user, e.g. privileges, view all users). Some account  
features include account expiration, password expiration (enforced by  
client), logon failure count, and maximum total postage.  
30 Transactions associated with a specific user may be audited and  
administration actions are tracked in an audit trail.

Once the audit log record is generated, the server receives the  
audit record, the updated database records, and the indicium message  
to the client from the module. The server stores the audit record on  
35 the audit file server and sends the PSD package and checkpoint record

1 to the database for storage. When the server gets confirmation that  
the database storage operation has been successful, the message  
containing the indicium is transmitted to the client application.

5 The create postage correction indicium command performs the  
correction indicia creation function. Preferably, it operates  
identically to the create indicium command except that it results in  
a correction indicium being generated.

10 Because redating indicia creation does not involve the PSD  
postal registers, the module does not perform this function. When  
redating of an indicia is necessary, preferably server software  
performs this function.

15 When a meter is removed from service, the create refund indicium  
command is used to empty the meter's DR. This command, which is a  
service of the provider role, is preferably sent from the provider  
infrastructure and signed with the provider key, VDSK\_auth.  
Preferably, this command can only be performed if the package is in  
the leased state or the pwreset state. When the module receives this  
20 command the result is the creation of an indicium equal to the value  
remaining in the DR. Because withdrawal is a special case of a  
normal indicium creation operation, the module preferably performs  
the same series of checks as for the create indicium command, the  
difference being the authentication of the provider in place of the  
customer. As a result of this command, the AR is increased by the  
25 amount of the refund indicium and the DR is reduced to zero. The PSD  
package state is changed to withdrawn which inhibits this meter from  
any further use. The indicia data, including a signature using the  
client's private key, is output to the server to allow the remaining  
funds to be credited to the client's account. The updated PSD  
30 package, checkpoint record, and audit log record, are output to the  
server for storage.

35 VBI value download messages are sent from the provider  
infrastructure to the PSD. When a customer deposits funds into their  
account, this triggers the provider's server (the provider software)  
to generate a VBI value download message to the customer's PSD. This

1 message is a service of the provider role and is signed by the  
provider key, VDSK\_auth. The message contains the meter number,  
control total value (from the last successful resetting), and the VBI  
5 download value. The module performs the following steps.

1. The provider signature on the message is verified.
2. The PSD package is authenticated by checking its DES MAC.
3. The PSD state is checked. Preferably, it should be in the  
leased state or pwreset state.
- 10 4. The meter number in the command must match the meter number  
in the PSD package.
5. The control total in the message must equal the sum of the  
AR and DR from the PSD package.
- 15 6. A check is made to ensure that the DR will not exceed a  
predetermined value (in one embodiment, \$500) after the new VBI  
is loaded. A check is also made to ensure that the AR will not  
exceed predetermined value after the new VBI is spent.
7. If the above tests pass, the module increments the DR by the  
VBI amount contained in the message.
- 20 8. The PSD package and checkpoint record are updated and DES  
MAC's are generated for both. These are output to the database  
server for storage.
9. The audit log record is generated and output to the server  
for storage on the audit file server.

25 Audit support provides functions that enable secure logging of  
all (sensitive) actions. The security requirements include the  
authenticity of the entries, completeness, and the inability to  
insert (fraudulent) additional entries. For reasons of storage space  
30 availability, the storage of the entries happens outside the module.  
Therefore, the security features are built into the audit entries  
themselves. To avoid involvement of the originating module (or  
cloning of the related keys) audit is public key based meaning, the  
audit entries are digitally signed. To address performance concerns,  
35 this is implemented as follows.

1  
Instead of signing each individual audit entry, the entries are  
securely chained, and only selected entries in the chain are  
digitally signed. The security of the chaining mechanism then makes  
5 sure that any previous entries in the chain are implicitly  
authenticate as well. This chaining can be achieved by means of a  
hash function: each entry also contains a hash code of the previous  
entry. Modification of any entry in the chain before a given one  
then requires finding a second value that hashes to the same hash  
10 code. (This is finding a second pre-image for the used hash  
function.) That is, the hash code provides a link back to the  
previous entry in the audit chain, and implicitly to the entire pre-  
existent audit chain. This is depicted in FIG. 7. In FIG. 7, the  
arrows between the (identical) hash codes indicate the linking back  
15 through the chain.

The only remaining risk is that the last few entries before a  
crash may be unsigned (and thus forgeable). This risk can be  
mitigated by forcing a signature for certain (more sensitive)  
actions, in addition to forcing a signature on a periodic, recurring  
basis (for example, each 100 entries) as well as for the first  
20 command after a reboot.

All sensitive actions generate an audit entry. Audit entry  
creation functionality are exposed to the module applications such  
that audit entries for all sensitive actions can be created. This is  
the responsibility of each of the functions themselves. Audit  
25 entries are available immediately at completion of the sensitive  
action, to avoid losing audit information due to a crash following  
it. This is done by providing the entry as a output parameter of the  
command itself. Storage is the responsibility of the host  
application. (the SCA layer can provide the tools to verify  
30 authenticity and completeness; given the absence of sufficient  
storage capabilities within the module, there is no way to guarantee  
availability of audit entries. Therefore, this is left to the host  
application.)

35 Audit is started at the earliest possible moment, that is, in

1 the Start Initialization command that effects the exit from  
Uninitialized state. This means that all sensitive actions following  
that event can be audited. During the Start Initialization command  
5 an Audit Signing Key (DSA) is generated. This event, and anything  
sensitive that follows can be audited by creating an audit entry.

In one embodiment, an audit entry includes:

- Audit record sequence number
- Hash of the previous audit record
- 10 • Identity of software module requesting generation of the  
audit record
- Identity of the command requesting generation of the audit  
record
- The user ID (if a user is logged on to the module)
- 15 • The user role (if a user is logged on to the module)
- The current state of the module
- The persistent state of the module
- Date/time stamp
- The reason code
- 20 • Data to be stored in the audit record (dependant on the  
requesting command)
- Signature (if required by the requesting command)

After the above data elements are prepared for output, a SHA-1  
hash for the record is computed and is stored in the module so that  
25 it can be included in the next generated audit record. An audit  
entry is chained to the previous entry by the hash of the previous  
entry, as shown in FIG. 7. The chaining is enforced by the module by  
always storing the last hash in persistent memory. The register used  
for this is initialized to all-zero (20 bytes) for the first entry.

30 The chain of audit records begins when the start initialization  
command is sent to a new module. This first command to the module  
generates the DSA audit signing key pair (VDSK\_audit and UDSK\_audit)  
and uses it to sign the first audit log record. Audit records for  
commands that affect the module (initialize cryptocard, checkpoint  
35 commands, etc) are always signed. Commands that affect a PSD package



1 are not signed but include the hash of the previous record to create  
a trusted chain of audit records between records that are signed.  
The server requests a signature on every several records, for  
5 example, every one hundredth record. The public key for  
authenticating audit record signatures, UDSK\_audit, is extracted from  
the module using the ExportAuditKey command. This command can only  
be executed by the Auditor role.

10 If an audit entry cannot be generated correctly and in its  
entirety, this is considered an error. Since the audit chain should  
not be broken, all data that is correctly obtained is returned in the  
audit entry. In addition, the command that just finished execution  
cannot be undone anymore. Therefore, the command results are  
15 returned to the caller (and eventually, the host) only if the error  
is non-fatal and the output processing can be performed (i.e. does  
not require Session Security commands). In general, no additional  
commands should be executed anymore, so the state is set to Error.

20 In case the audit chain is still unbroken, the error is not  
fatal, and may be recoverable through a reboot. (I.e., Persistent  
state is not set to error.) If the hash chain is broken, the audit  
is permanently damaged (reliability of any entries younger than the  
latest signature before the error is somewhat questionable). In this  
case, the error is fatal, and both Current and Persistent state are  
set to Error. This is not recoverable, except through a  
25 reinitialization of the module.

30 To avoid continued operation with damaged audit creation  
capability, the first command after a reboot should be audited, with  
a forced signature. This ensures that permanently damaged audit  
creation capability allows the execution of at most one command after  
rebooting. Since no sensitive functionality can be accessed directly  
at reboot (e.g., at least a session and a user logon are required),  
this ensures that no sensitive commands can be executed with damaged  
audit entry creation capabilities. In summary, audit entry creation  
only leads to command failure if a fatal error is encountered. If  
35 the error is non-fatal, an incomplete audit entry is returned for the

1 command. In addition, the command's results are returned to the  
caller if their output processing can be performed (i.e. does not  
require Session Security commands). Also, audit entry creation set  
5 the state to Error in case of failure to deliver a complete entry.  
This error is fatal (non-recoverable except through re-  
initialization) in case the linking with the existing audit chain is  
lost. (This occurs only if the previous hash or the sequence number  
are unavailable.). This is implemented by setting both Current and  
10 Persistent state to Error. This error is recoverable through  
rebooting in all other cases. This is implemented by setting only  
Current state to Error (Persistent state is not modified). The first  
command after booting should always generate a signed audit entry.  
This ensures that no sensitive commands are executed if the audit is  
15 permanently faulty.

The Audit Support Commands include:

- Export audit key
- Create a new audit key
- Create audit entry. This command has a flag to indicate  
20 forcing of signature.
- In addition, the Start Initialization command performs the  
initialization of the Audit (as well as general module  
initialization) and as such is grouped in the Audit  
Support module.

25 External storage (external to the module) and management of the  
audit database is entirely up to the host; neither SCA nor SHL can  
play a role in that. In one embodiment, the postal servers store  
redundant copies of the audit log records on a mirror disk. Storage  
directly to disk is considered to be more reliable than storage on  
30 the database server which is accessed through the LAN. Storing the  
audit records separately from the PSD package database also protects  
against all data being lost if the database should suffer a  
catastrophic failure.

35 A proper audit verifies the completeness of the audit chain, by  
verifying all hashes in the chain, starting from the last verified

1 signature, and ending at the most recently created signature. In  
addition, all signatures encountered should be verified. Finally,  
the hash of the most recently created audit entry should be logged  
5 (manually) to ensure that replacement of the entire chain will be  
detected. For example, in FIG. 7, if Audit Entry 4 were the last  
entry, one would verify Signature 1, Hashes 1 through 4 (establishing  
that the chain is unbroken) and Signature 4. (If Audit Entry 2 were  
signed as well, that signature should be verified as well.) The  
10 Auditor would then log Hash 4 as verified (e.g., written in an audit  
report) such that the next audit can start at Signature 4. (One may  
still want to verify that all earlier entries are present.)

15 Provider software, running on the e-commerce server, verifies  
the integrity of the audit log records at predetermined time  
intervals. First, the chain of records from each module is verified  
by checking all hash values and authenticating the necessary  
signatures. Next, the records from all module can be combined and  
sorted by meter number and time to view the history of each meter.  
Because each PSD's AR value is recorded in the audit record after  
20 each PSD transaction, a database replay attack, which would rollback  
the AR to an earlier value, can be detected. If the audit log  
verification process fails for any reason, the Security Officer is  
notified, for example, by e-mail. The verification starts at the  
most recent entry and work back towards the entry logged for the  
25 previous audit, or the start from the entry logged for the previous  
audit and work forward to the most recent entry.

30 It will be recognized by those skilled in the art that various  
modifications may be made to the illustrated and other embodiments of  
the invention described above, without departing from the broad  
inventive scope thereof. It will be understood therefore that the  
invention is not limited to the particular embodiments or  
arrangements disclosed, but is rather intended to cover any changes,  
adaptations or modifications which are within the scope and spirit of  
the invention as defined by the appended claims.